ONCE AN ARTIST ALWAYS AN ARTIST



THE DEPÔT.

"Once an Artist always an Artist."

[*Frontispiece.*

ONCE AN ARTIST ALWAYS AN ARTIST

By CAPT. C. J. BLOMFIELD, T.D.

PAGE & COMPANY
ELEVEN GOWER STREET, LONDON

First published 1921

INTRODUCTORY

AS the result of a suggestion made to me by a brother officer, I have tried to put on paper a few notes of my recollections of past days in the Artists, mingled with a little of the early history of the regiment and with some of my experiences while in command of the Depôt from November, 1914, to May, 1919.

I cannot think that my effort will be of interest to the general public, but of the many thousands of men who passed through the ranks of the Artists' Rifles to commissions in other units, some, I feel sure, will like to hear more about the regiment.

An official history of the Artists, with an account of the work and fighting of the 1st Battalion, is to be compiled, and it is to be hoped that something about the training and work of the 2nd Battalion at home will be added.

This volume, such as it is, is not produced officially or on behalf of the regiment, and I have therefore built my tale largely on the foundations of my own experience and have avoided returns and statistics.

INTRODUCTORY

I do not think that the services rendered by the Territorials in the early days of the war are as fully appreciated or as widely realized as they should be. It must be remembered that these were the men who, many of them, for a number of years, gave up a large part of their leisure time, endured the sneers of others who were too lazy to lend a hand themselves, put up with the half-hearted encouragement of the War Office, and the damning with faint praise of politicians. In spite of which they stuck to the job they had taken on, the result being that when our truly great little Expeditionary Force of the Regular Army had to be backed up at short notice, it was the Territorials who filled the gap and helped to keep the Huns busy until the new army was ready, and, above all, did incalculable service in providing numbers of officers and N.C.O.s to assist in training the many thousands who answered Kitchener's call.

The reason, probably, for the non-acceptance of any form of general military service was the inability of the nation to visualize the possibility of Great Britain ever being involved in a war of Continental proportions, and still less that of the recent conflict. Joining the old Volunteers or subsequently, the Territorials, was looked upon by most people as a good enough amusement for "those who liked that sort of thing," but as it was obvious that it would interfere to some extent with football, cricket, golf, the river and

various other games and sports, the majority of the young men of the country were not in favour of trying to qualify for its defence. Then there was always the man who could not find time for Volunteering on account of his business, although I have often observed in past years in the Artists that the men who displayed most energy in their work in the corps were those who were most deeply engaged, and successful in, their civilian calling. There were many cases where the whole of a man's leisure time (much to the annoyance of wives in the case of married men) was devoted to one form of activity or another with the corps to which he belonged. The idea prevalent among many people was that a few Saturday afternoons were given up to drill and shooting, and that this, with a few days at Easter and, possibly, a week's camp in the summer, represented all that the Volunteers did, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was usual, especially in the later Volunteer and Territorial pre-war days, for many officers and N.C.O.s to devote two or three nights a week to various forms of Company Training or administration, while, in addition, other evenings were occupied in dealing with correspondence, reports, and returns.

When interviewing applicants, during the war, for enlistment in the Artists, men often, in reply to a query as to whether they had done any soldiering of any kind before the war, said they had never

been in the Volunteers or Territorials "but wished they had been," adding occasionally something to the effect that they never believed or realized that there was any chance of the Volunteers or Territorials being really wanted.

The way in which all that was best in the Country rose to the call, although some took time to realize what we were up against, is fresh in the memory of all of us, and has been, and will be, told many a time by others better qualified to describe it than I am. The pride which all of us who on account of age or other reasons had to stick to a home job felt for those who fought for us is very real and we rejoice in being of the same race as those who have passed on.

I have to express my sincere thanks to those who have so kindly and readily assisted me in compiling these notes about the Artists: to Captain and Quartermaster F. R. Light for part of the early history; to A. G. Cowell (formerly Sergeant of Transport) for the account of the School of Arms, etc.; to A. C. Drewry (late Sergeant) in respect of the athletic meetings; to W. A. Huggins (late Sergeant) for the account of "Philhurst"; to Lieutenant Bernard Howard for particulars of the Junior Cadet Company; to Colonel May for details of his School of Instruction at Tidworth; to Sergt.-Major Paton for movements of the 1st Battalion in France before going into the line as a fighting unit.

Particulars of the raising and work of the C.I.V.

for the South African War are taken from General Mackinnon's book on the subject.

Finally, I have to thank Lieutenant Leonard P. Moore for his guidance and help in producing the whole.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

CHAPTER I

MARS AND MINERVA

THE original proposal for the founding of the Corps in 1858, when the Volunteer Force was first started, is commonly attributed to a young student named Edward Stirling, a member of Carey's Art School. Stirling, who was a ward of Thomas Carlyle and had served in the Cornish Militia, started the project in the life class at Carey's, explaining to his fellow-students how such a body of men could be enrolled and asking for the names of those willing to join with him in raising a company. Apparently the response was not enthusiastic. Some excused themselves on the ground of age, one because he was a Government clerk, another was a Papist, and one because he was a Scotsman. The result was that three members only (Edward Stirling, Field Talfourd, and John Milner Allen) gave in their names and undertook to find recruits. The spade work by these pioneers was successful, for some time afterwards, at Henry Wyndham Phillips' studio, Lord Bury (Regimental No. 1), Thomas Hughes, John Everett Millais, Arthur Lewis,

Henry Wyndham Phillips, George Cayley, Alfred Nicholson, and Alfred Wigan attended. It was decided at this gathering to form an Artists' Corps to be recruited from amongst professional painters, sculptors, engravers, musicians, architects and actors, with a leaven of well-known amateurs.

In the early pages of the Regimental Rolls, in addition to those already mentioned, we find Frederick Leighton, afterwards Sir Frederick, and then Lord, Leighton, President of the Royal Academy and Commanding Officer of the Corps; Robert W. Edis, who, succeeding to the command after Lord Leighton's retirement, made the Artists his first care for twenty years, giving all his spare time to work in the Corps, and furthering its interests in every shape and form. It is not too much to say that but for the energy and leadership of Colonel Edis from 1882 to 1902, the Artists would never have attained their high position in the Volunteer and Territorial Forces.

Those first pages of the Rolls contain also the names of Val Prinsep; G. F. Watts; Charles Edward Perugini; F. P. Cockerell; William B. Richmond; Walter Severn; Edward J. Poynter; Philip Calderon; H. Stacey Marks; W. F. Yeames; Arthur Severn; Holman Hunt; William Morris, and many others who, in later years, became eminent in various branches of the Arts or other walks of life.

A small Committee was formed, F. P. Cockerell



[To face page 14.



COL. EDIS.

[To face

acting as Secretary, rules were drawn up, and on the fly-leaf of the first Muster Roll is entered under "Regulations for Recruits," the following particulars :—

Height, 5 feet 3 inches; chest measurement, 32 inches; price of uniform, £3 8*s.* 4*d.* (At the outbreak of the war our minimum height standard was 5 feet 7 inches, and minimum chest measurement 35 inches.) Each member undertook to find his own kit and to pay an entrance fee of half a guinea and an annual subscription of one guinea.

In a Corps which at first contained so many painters and artists, it was natural that the question of uniform, and especially the colour thereof, should have given rise to lengthy discussion. This question, however, was threshed out at last, and resulted in the adoption of the tunic (submitted by Stirling) of the same grey colour which has been adhered to ever since and which is still the colour of our full dress (white facings were substituted for grey in 1908). The relative merits of shako and képi having been pressed by their respective advocates, the former was chosen as the head-dress. Arms (the muzzle-loading "Enfield") were issued and drill was energetically carried on under Sergeant Hocking of the Guards—our first drill instructor.

Headquarters were at first found at the Argyll Rooms, but were afterwards transferred to Burlington House; then, in 1868, to the Arts Club, 17,

Hanover Square, W. In 1880 a move was made to the West London School of Art, 155, Great Titchfield Street, and in 1882 another change was made and headquarters were established at No. 36, Fitzroy Square. In 1889 the Regiment took up its present quarters in Duke's Road, Euston Road.

Before the move from Argyll Rooms, Cayley provided the Regimental motto, "Cum Marte Minerva," together with a marching song, with this motto as its title. The song was set to music of Salvator Rosa's by Alfred Nicholson at the suggestion of Leighton, and was used for many years as the Regimental Air.

At first the Corps was known as "The Artists' Company," but the official designation was the 38th Middlesex (Artists) Volunteer Corps, and in 1864 it became a Rifle Volunteer Corps.

The first entry in the Rolls is dated May 10th, 1860, and the establishment consisted of four companies, the first posting to No. 4 Company being in August of that year. In 1869 a fifth company was added. In 1872 lettering was adopted—A, B, C, D, E taking the place of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. In 1876 "F" Company was raised, and in 1877 "G" and "H," making an eight-company battalion. In 1871 the "Snider" breech-loading rifle was issued to the Volunteers in place of the muzzle-loading "Enfield," Battalion Orders of January 27th, 1871, directing that the latter be returned to the Armourer at Headquarters.

The first Commandant of the Corps was Lord Bury, afterwards Earl of Albemarle, and he was succeeded by Captain Henry Wyndham Phillips. The latter died in December, 1868, and Battalion Orders of December 30th, 1868, gave notice that "A general meeting of the Corps will be held at the 1st Middlesex Artillery Drill Hall, Leicester Square, on Wednesday, January 6th, at 5 o'clock p.m., to elect a Commanding Officer and to transact other business." The result of this meeting does not appear in Orders, but Frederick Leighton was chosen as Phillips' successor. It is interesting, in these days, to look back on the times when a C.O. was elected by votes of all ranks of the Regiment.

The first Adjutant was Captain E. R. King Harman (King's Royal Rifles). He was appointed on November 28th, 1863, and after retiring from the Regular service, remained with the Artists and commanded No. 4 (University College) Company from 1865 to 1870, when he resigned his commission. He was succeeded in the Adjutancy by Captain James A. Ramsay of the Bombay Army, who held the appointment until May, 1880.

In 1875 shoulder straps with "38th Middlesex" embroidered thereon were adopted and "a strap of black braid running down the outer seam of the trousers" was added in the case of the N.C.O.s and men. In '79 the shako was replaced by the helmet. In 1880 the official designation of the

Corps was changed from 38th to 20th Middlesex (Artists) Rifle Volunteers.

In these days, when so many of us who served in the old Volunteers have been carrying on the duties of Regular soldiers and have been hedged in with all the accompanying Army Council Instructions, District Orders, Army Form this, and Army Form that, it is interesting to look through Battalion Orders of those days, and to trace the evolution from the sort of tea-party business and the " please be a good boy and attend the next parade " method of handling the members of a Corps to the more soldierly practices of later days.

As an instance of the confidential and encouraging tone adopted, I give an extract from one of the early Battalion Orders : " The following arrangements have been made by the C.O. for a Flying March of two days and a half, to begin on Saturday afternoon next and end on Monday, August 2nd, from which, passing, as it will, through some of the most delightful scenery in the South of England, he promises himself great pleasure and enjoyment. This plan has been adopted in preference to a camp, which the insufficient response he has met with, owing no doubt to the lateness of the season, does not, unfortunately, justify him in attempting. Meanwhile, he feels that the present arrangement has all the elements of a most instructive and enjoyable expedition."

Unfortunately there are no records of the responses accorded to this fascinating invitation, but it would be interesting to know whether the great pleasure and enjoyment which the C.O. promised himself materialized, and also whether it extended to those whom he took with him. What disappointment to the keen ones was hidden under "the insufficient response he has met with"! Incidentally, one wonders why, if a Flying March was preferred to a camp, any attempt was made to form the latter. However, we must not be too critical of these early struggles with adversity. They are all milestones in the evolution I have before referred to.

Arthur Severn, the well-known artist, who joined the Corps on December 4th, 1866, and served as a private therein for fourteen years, has told me that, of the many happenings within his recollection, a big review at Windsor is ever present to his mind. The parade was ordered without haversacks, in spite of which all arrangements for food and drink were conspicuous by their absence, with the natural result that the troops came away from the review in a famished condition. A company in the battalion preceding the Artists, when crossing a pontoon bridge at Datchet, finding their empty stomachs too much for their self-control, pulled their colonel off his horse and ducked him in the river! Severn adds that none of the Artists behaved like this (I should think not!) and that the particular

company which perpetrated the assault was promptly disbanded by the War Office.

Severn also relates how, on one occasion, on an Easter Monday, in the early morning, as he was going down Herne Hill in uniform to a review, he noticed some holiday makers coming up and knew he would have to run a gauntlet of chaff. Sure enough it came, for one of the girls, on catching sight of Severn, clutched her man's arm and said, "Why, Bill, 'ere's 'Amlet's bogey with 'is gun."

In "Rules and Byelaws" of the Corps, framed in 1871 is the following:—

	£	s.	d.
(*a*) For pointing the rifle loaded or unloaded at any person without orders	1	0	0
(*b*) For loading the rifle without orders .		2	6
(*c*) For discharging the rifle accidentally .		2	6
(*d*) For discharging the rifle or snapping a cap without permission		2	6
(*e*) For discharging the rifle or snapping a cap in any other place than that indicated by the officer or N.C.O. in command .		2	6
(*f*) For shooting out of turn without leave when engaged in ball practice . . .		2	6
(*g*) For striking or taking a light of any kind in the shed, on the range or practice ground		2	6
(*h*) For hitting the dummy target on the range, each time			6
(*i*) For firing when the disc or danger signal is shown		10	0

To those of us who have recently been through the military mill the fines quoted seem extraordinarily inadequate as punishments for some of



HENRY W. PHILLIPS.
Captain and First Commandant Artists R.V. (died 1868).

To face page 20

Photographed by Capt. D. W. Wynfield.



CAPTAIN E. R. KING-HARMAN (LATE 60TH FOOT).
First Adjutant Artists R.V. 1863–1865. Commanded No. 4 University Co. (D), 1865–1869.

To face page 21

Photographed by Captain Wynfield.

the offences; but it must be remembered that where such rules were broken it was probably unintentional, and also, of course, a result of insufficient training. Considering that the only real punishment which it was in the power of the commanding officer to inflict was dismissal from the regiment, it is marvellous how little real indiscipline ever showed itself, or how seldom the members did anything to bring discredit on the Corps.

Although originally founded by artists, the Corps has never been confined to representatives of the various branches of the Arts. Had this been so it is doubtful whether the Corps would have continued to exist, and although many distinguished artists have been members, some of the best men of the Corps, both in the past and in later years, have had no connection with Art. The majority of those holding commissions were, at first, painters, architects, sculptors, musicians, etc., but inasmuch as when once a man had joined as a private he could rise to a commission irrespective of his civilian calling, a fusion of other professions gradually came about among officers of the Corps—to the advantage, I think, of all concerned.

In my experience a Volunteer regiment was generally composed of:—

1. Keen men who had plenty of spare time and devoted practically all of it to the corps.
2. Keen men whose spare time was strictly

limited by the exigencies of their civilian occupation.

3. The average member, who made a more or less respectable sort of show in the matter of shooting and attendance at drill.
4. The slackers, who wanted constant whipping up before they would do much.
5. The rotters, who did little or nothing, and on whom no amount of whipping up had the slightest effect.

The Volunteer regiments raised during the war had, to a certain extent, the same experience, although the war-time Volunteer Training Corps did as much work in a month as we, in the old days, used to get through in a year—in fact, they put in a lot of very fine work which deserved wider recognition than it received.

In the early days of the Artists' Rifles there was nothing in the shape of a regimental club or meeting place of any description, where members could foregather. The official Headquarters in Hanover Square consisted merely of an Orderly Room, and an Armoury where the trusty "Sniders" were kept from rust by a veteran Guardsman; but if any meeting, convivial or otherwise, was projected by members, suitable quarters had to be found for the purpose. Consequently, after the two hours' drill, which took place on two or three evenings a week on the dusty playground of University College School, a few of the gravel-wearied warriors pos-

sessing Bohemian tendencies and a good deal of enthusiasm for their regiment, would hie themselves with as little delay as possible to the coffee-room of a certain hostelry in the immediate neighbourhood, and there spend a restful hour or so, discussing things in general and Corps matters in particular. Here it was that the School of Arms had its origin, and also the Regimental Transport, the Artists' Dramatic Club (which had but a short life), and the "Socials" which ultimately blossomed into the popular Battalion Smoking Concerts for which the Regiment became so well known. In fact, many suggestions and ideas originated among the members of this little coterie, all having the efficiency and advancement of the Corps as their object.

At that time very little was known about the use of the bayonet in volunteer corps. There were only two occasions on which bayonets were actually fixed, viz., in "Form square to receive cavalry," front rank kneeling, officers in the centre, as in the good old days of Quatre Bras, and on the occasion of the general salute, at the annual inspection—an anxious moment for the Sergt.-Major, as nervous recruits were apt to overlook the necessity for giving a proper twist to the locking-ring of the bayonet, with the result that the latter was liable to fall off at the critical moment, as, indeed, at this important annual function one or two generally did!

Our little band of enthusiasts came to the conclusion that instruction in bayonet-exercise should be introduced into the regiment in order that the men might become more familiar with the lethal weapon, and having approached the authorities on the subject, approval was duly given and a class for instruction formed. A small annual subscription was readily paid by the members to meet the cost of special tuition by the regimental instructor, Sergeant Fullerton, who was afterwards Sergt.-Major of the Corps for many years, and had the reputation of knowing by heart not only the name, but also the regimental number, of every man in the Artists. Several bayonet squads were formed and in due course became very smart at the exercise. The next step to be taken was the application of the guards and points of the exercise to actual combats with the bayonet, and this resulted in a meeting being held at which it was decided to form a regimental School of Arms where not only bayonet fighting could be taught, but also the use of the sabre, single-sticks and foils, and boxing and gymnastics. The necessary permission having been obtained, a committee was formed, and a sub-committee of one, Colour-Sergeant Hamilton, was deputed to discover an instructor.

Armed with plenary powers our sub-committee sallied forth to Regent's Park Barracks and on the way fell in with Corporal of Horse MacPherson, fencing-instructor to the Royal Horse Guards, one

of the finest swordsmen and men-at-arms in the British Army. Accepting the welcome of an adjacent inn, the requirements were explained, and MacPherson being willing to undertake the work, his first professional engagement was made. Having secured this excellent instructor, our committee next took a small and unpretentious hall in Castle Street, Oxford Street, levied a subscription of five shillings and sixpence per annum, bought or borrowed a few weapons of sorts, and in November, 1876, the Artists' School of Arms was begun.

Rapidly increasing in membership, the School soon outgrew the somewhat limited accommodation in Castle Street and migrated to more commodious premises in the Portland British Schools close by, where the staff of instructors was increased and considerable additions made to the plant. In a very few years it again became apparent that it was necessary to increase the accommodation, and the School accordingly moved to the Queen's Road Baths, Bayswater, more up-to-date gymnastic apparatus being provided, and the services of the best army and professional instructors being obtained.

The popularity of the School grew apace, and many members became very efficient in the use of arms, boxing, physical drill, wrestling, single-sticks, Indian clubs, rope-climbing, etc. In 1889 the School made its final move to the new Headquarters of the regiment, in Duke's Road, Euston Road,

where, amid a completely new set of gymnastic apparatus and weapons of the latest pattern, it found a permanent home.

Owing to the excellent instructors which were secured, the School rapidly took a leading position and established a good record of success in individual and team competitions at the Royal Military Tournament, Metropolitan School of Arms Association, and similar meetings. From 1882, the second year of the Royal Military Tournament, until the meeting was discontinued on account of the war (a period of thirty-one years) the Corps was represented by winners in both individual and team competitions annually, with the exception of three years only.

The success of the Corps team in the inter-battalion bayonet combat for the Auxiliary Forces was really remarkable, as they carried off the first prize in the competition for nine successive years, and in 1905 the Artists, winners of the Auxiliary Forces competition, challenged the winning team of the Navy and Regular Army competition, which resulted in victory for the Artists.

The School held its first Assault at Arms in March, 1877, an exhibition which it has held annually ever since, up to 1914. In 1909 it enlarged its sphere of activity, and under the able organization of Sergeant E. W. Boot, who was at that time Secretary of the School of Arms, athletic meetings were arranged, greatly to the advantage of the

regiment and resulting in the discovery of talented performers who were able to compete in the inter-regimental athletic sports which were held under the auspices of the Territorial Force Association. The first of these T.F.A. meetings was held in 1910 on the Rugby Union football ground at Twickenham, and thereafter meetings were held annually up to the outbreak of war, with the result that the School of Arms won more laurels for the Corps by pulling off, during those four years, eight first and six second prizes. The Artists also supplied representatives for the London Regiment in the National Territorials Championship, securing the first prize in the long jump in 1911 and second in the 100 yards.

Another important enterprise which did much to foster *esprit de corps* was the Boating Club at Staines, known as "Philhurst," an inspiration of the fertile brain of the late Major C. A. Philip, who, at the time of the foundation of the club, was Colour-Sergeant of "D" Company. Philip, universally known as "Phil," being anxious to do all in his power to encourage shooting at Runnymede range, conceived the idea of offering the men of his company an inducement to spend week-ends at Staines, arguing that if targets were available early on Mondays, thereby making practice at the range possible before business hours, men would avail themselves of such facilities. A small house was taken at Staines, close to the river, and its name

changed to "Philhurst." Conforming as nearly as possible to conditions obtaining in barracks, the club-house was furnished in simple fashion: the bedrooms were provided with army beds and blankets, while the dining-room was supplied with forms and deal tables, the latter being washed down after each meal.

At the outset membership of "D" Company constituted the qualification for election to the Club, a few members of other companies being added, *honoris causa.* In later years, however, the qualification for membership was more elastic and men from other companies admitted more freely, although, by the rules, "D" Company always retained a majority on the committee.

A tariff, at practically cost price, was fixed for each meal, and any member could stay a night at the Club by giving a few hours' notice. At first, all the cooking and house-work was carried out by the members, but, after a short time, a steward was engaged, who did the catering and cooking, and looked after the domestic matters of the Club generally. Each member, however, was responsible for his own bed and kit, as if in barracks, and woe betide the man who left any belongings anywhere but in his bag or locker. If discovered by "Phil," they could be recovered, but only on payment of a fine, unless it happened to be at the end of a season, when they were remorselessly impounded and sold by auction at the Club on the closing night.



Capt. W. W. Bruce. Capt. L. W. Ridge. Capt. Lucas. Capt. Spiers.
Major R. W. Edis. Lt.-Col. Sir Frederick Leighton. Capt. Ramsey (Adjt.).

A GROUP, 1878

[To face page 28.



THREE OF THE ORIGINAL PRIVATES.

[To face page 29.

The Club possessed a "fleet" of boats, viz., two treble-sculling skiffs, one double-sculler, two canoes and a punt, all of which were free for the use of members. There was also a lawn-tennis court adjoining the boat-house. Nearly every Sunday in the season a party left the Club with a luncheon hamper, for an all-day expedition, the favourite trip being to Windsor race-course, albeit on occasions longer distances were undertaken, the record being a journey to Hurley and back. Those who preferred tennis, or a less strenuous time in a punt or canoe, were able to indulge their wish. Full camping kit for the boats was kept at the Club, and many enjoyable holidays were spent under canvas at Hurley, Cookham and Goring, while, on occasions, the whole distance to Oxford and back was covered in stages, the night being spent under canvas at different places. The punt generally put in its appearance at Henley Regatta, the members camping at Hurley for the week.

The event of the year at "Philhurst" was the Club Regatta, which, starting in a small way, became one of the most important annual social functions of the Corps. All the races, which were of the most varied description, finished opposite the tennis lawn, where tea was provided for members and their guests (the latter, of course, being mostly represented by the fair sex), and the efforts of the Club to make the entertainment worthy of the occasion were much appreciated. The serious

racing included the sculling championship for the Battalion, in " best boats," and the inter-company fours. The less serious races, such as skiff races with lady coxswains, inter-company dongolas, canoe and costume races, tub and novelty races of great variety, never failed to amuse the many spectators, whose enjoyment seemed to increase in proportion to the number of men who by accident, or design, fell into the river.

The Club was opened, as a rule, at Easter and closed at the end of September. For many years the closing night was celebrated by a goose supper, to which members of the other riverside camps associated with the Corps were invited. The dining-room at " Philhurst " seemed to have no limit to the number of diners it could contain, and on regatta days and goose supper nights it was no unusual occurrence for sixty, or even seventy, meals to be served. " Phil " never failed to preside at any Club function, and to his marked personality and untiring energy must be attributed the invariably successful and cheery nature of every meeting of the Club. Probably one of the best remembered episodes in the history of the Club was at one of the goose suppers, when " Phil," dissatisfied with the progress made by the half-dozen carvers who were endeavouring to dissect the birds, sent for the garden shears, and, in a very few minutes, had served every one, albeit with somewhat shapeless and battered portions.

Although Corps rank was dropped at "Philhurst," "Phil" himself, as Captain of the Club, was a despot. A decision or edict of his was law from which there was no appeal. As an institution, the Club was probably unique, and no greater bond of friendship could exist than between the men who lived together there. But the whole of the success of the Club, all the happiest and most vivid recollections in the minds of its members, will for ever be associated with the wonderful personality of the man who conceived the idea, and started and ran the Club—the one and only "Phil."

CHAPTER II

THE YEARS BEFORE THE WAR

I JOINED the Artists as a private in April, 1882, when the Regiment was commanded by the late Lord Leighton (then Sir Frederick Leighton), President of the Royal Academy, an admirable C.O., although at one of the first Battalion parades I attended, he parted company with his horse in an unexpected and disconcerting manner. Even in this unequivocal position his presence of mind did not desert him. He had just given the command: " Battalion ! Fours ! " (this was before the days of " Form fours "), when his horse took exception to the whole proceeding and the President took a neat toss. The horse galloped away, but Sir Frederick calmly rose to his feet, completed the interrupted command with the word " Right ! " and the evolution was proceeded with, the horse being eventually brought back from Hyde Park Corner by a mounted policeman, and the C.O. reinstalled in the saddle.

Sir Frederick Leighton retired in 1883 and was succeeded by Major Robert W. Edis, to whose



PRIVATE, A.R.V., 1876.

[To face page 32.



THE C.O. IN 1883. (AFTER NINE MONTHS' SERVICE.)

"Sketch Portrait Prize," by his Captain, the late D. W. Wynfield.

[*To face page 33.*

energy and sound leadership as Colonel commanding the regiment for a period of twenty years I have already referred. Walter Horsley, who followed Colonel Edis in the command in 1902, was a very popular subaltern at the time I joined, and I recollect that he was in the Orderly Room when I was sworn in, smoking a very large cigar—which he carefully removed, of course, during my attestation.

H. A. R. May was a recruit with me in 1882, and I do not suppose there has ever been any one in the regiment who from the time he joined until he took the 1st Battalion to France in October, 1914, has done better or more consistently hard work for the Artists. He had a great deal to do with the compiling and editing of the "Grey Book," for many years the Bible of the Corps. Some years ago, at an annual supper of the company May then commanded, J. C. Horsley (the R.A. and father of Colonel Walter Horsley), who was a guest, said of May, "That is a very remarkable young man." The truth of this was, I think, fully borne out by May's subsequent career and work in the Artists.

Owing to the multifarious duties devolving on a President of the Royal Academy, the greater part of the work in connection with the command had been carried out for some time by Major Edis before he became Colonel, and, among other things, I call to mind cheery smoking "At Homes" at

his house in Fitzroy Square, when all ranks were welcomed. The musical, acting, and entertaining talents of the Artists have always been of a high order, and have contributed much to the *bon camaraderie* existing in the Corps. The Battalion smoking concerts, held at the Regimental Headquarters in Duke's Road, were for many years a most important social feature and among the best entertainments of the kind to be found anywhere. Among the large number of men who joined the Artists during the war were talented musicians, actors, and others, including a most excellent and amusing conjuror, the result being that, in spite of the exigencies of strenuous training, the pre-war reputation of the Artists in the matter of concerts was more than sustained.

My first Easter with the Artists was in 1883, our sojourn at Brighton being preceded by the customary march from London of a detachment. This march, originally initiated by Walter Horsley, was known in those days as the "Baggage Guard," but later as the "Marching Detachment," and a very stout guard it was for the protection of one wagon. However, the march being the principal object, and not the guarding of the wagon. the strength of the guard was immaterial. As the years passed on, this guard or detachment became more and more popular, and, so far as the Corps was concerned, was one of the events in the Volunteer year. The time came when two or more wagons

were "guarded" and the drums accompanied the little column.

The musical propensities of the Artists were always much to the fore on these occasions, and it was very seldom that the march was not enlivened by many a good song, the chorus being generally stronger after lunch than before. From a soldiering point of view, the work carried out on these marches was always good, and much excellent practice was afforded in the matter of advance and rear guards, billets, guards, pickets, etc. Sometimes the march afforded opportunities for testing various inventors' fads, in the form either of some special detail of equipment, or a nastily conceived condensed ration, and these adjuncts of the march were not usually appreciated.

We took with us at Easter, 1883, a contraption on the Chinese principle, introduced by General Moncrieff (at that time commanding the Scots Guards), consisting of a single wheel, bearing a tray or carrier, which could be used for transporting kits, entrenching tools, ammunition, water, etc. This arrangement was towed by squads of the detachment in reliefs, and was not at all popular; at any rate, it gave rise to a good deal of vigorous language. I do not remember ever seeing it after that Easter, but it reached Brighton and was used as an ammunition carrier in the field-work there.

We were billeted in barns on Banstead Downs, near Epsom, on the first night. It was freezing

hard, and I remember my bed was on a heap of mangold wurzels. Our halt next evening was at Crawley, where we had more comfortable billets, and among other excitements were entertained in the bar of the local hostel by a knife-grinder with an interminable song about a "Colly Bird"—whatever that may be—the first verse running:

"On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me
A colly bird in the morning,"

each succeeding verse adding some fresh bird or beast to the bag. There were so many verses and the song went on so long that, finally, we had to sit on the knife-grinder and squeeze the remaining wind out of him.

At Brighton we were quartered at the Corn Exchange, and before we arrived there, as we were getting towards the end of our third day's march—the Battalion, by the way, joined us at Crawley—we passed a General and his staff who were watching the troops marching in, and as we passed we heard the General say, "Ah! a remarkably fine body of men," which commendation pleased us greatly, although of course we did not require the evidence even of a General to convince us of a fact regarding which we were already fully satisfied. Nevertheless, the words of approval encouraged us and added to our respective heights and chest expansion for the rest of the march.

Talking of 1883, I am reminded of an incident

in the march past on Easter Monday of that year. The youngster (he and I were both youngsters then) who took me into the Corps carried a good deal of youthful, and therefore, harmless, side, or as the more modern slang has it, "swank," and instead of going past "like part of a wall," as we were in those good old days told to do (this was long before the days when arms were swung), he put on a lot of independent display and arm-swinging for the benefit of the onlookers, thereby bringing down the wrath of his section commander —a corporal, and afterwards a successful animal painter—who promptly told him off for behaving like a —— ——.

"Oh, rot! what does it matter?" my friend retorted.

"I'll tell you what matters," said the corporal, "and that is the credit of the Corps."

My friend, not long afterwards, went to South Africa, where he did very well as an architect, working his way into a large and very successful practice, and, incidentally, commanding a troop of the Imperial Light Horse in the South African War. He was serving in the Great War as a Colonel, and much to my regret, as I had never seen him again, died at home early in 1918. His performance in the march past with the Artists in '83 may not have redounded to the credit of the Corps, but his subsequent work in life more than made amends.

There has always been a strong *esprit de corps* in the Artists and a species of freemasonry, analogous to the spirit among the old boys of our Public Schools, and the adage " Play for your side and not for yourself " has always been much in evidence. In the selection of recruits during the war, old members of the Corps, other things being equal, were, whenever possible, given first consideration.

On January 14th, 1919, an elderly architect appeared at the Depôt to make inquiries about the meeting which had been called to consider the question of an Artists' Rifles' War Memorial. I found he was an ex-private of the regiment who, at the age of thirty-one, joined in 1874. At the time he called at the Depôt, therefore, he was seventy-five. I looked him up in the Rolls and, much to his delight, showed him the record of his entry into the regiment. He informed me that he was still in the habit of spreading his Artists' regimental great-coat over his bed at night. On leaving he told me that he was badly off when the Headquarters in Duke's Road were built in 1887, and could not therefore subscribe as he would have liked to do, and added, " But I mean to be in this," referring to the War Memorial. This is but one of many instances that have come before my notice of the affection in which the Corps is held by old members.

At Easter, 1884, we marched from London to Portsmouth, i.e., the " Baggage Guard " trekked

all the way, starting on the Tuesday before Easter, and the rest of the Battalion joined us on the Thursday evening. On the first night our little lot, of "H" Company, were billeted in a cowshed at Esher, and I remember that the "Devil's Own" were comfortably housed on the opposite side of the village and indulged in the luxury of palliasses which had been brought down from London for them to lie on. On arrival we marched to Eastney Barracks, where we were quartered with the Blue Marines, who made us very much at home and comfortable—in fact, they "made a lot" of us.

During the war a distinguished General turned up at the Depôt one day to see me about a boy he wanted to get into the Artists, and, in the course of conversation, I found that he was Adjutant at Eastney in '84, and recalled our marching in and staying with them.

"I shall always remember your marching in," he said. "I admired the Artists then, and have always taken the greatest interest in the Corps ever since."

Among other Easters, recollections of which come back to me, as I daresay also to others who were there, I have a keen remembrance of 1893, when we were sent to Eastbourne, and enjoyed the most perfect weather I ever came across at that time of year. On that occasion we were very much "bucked" by a remark made by a certain well-known Military Correspondent of the *Times* who

was there reporting the operations. He was standing outside the Grand Hotel where, by the way, our Officers' Mess was located, and a rather ragged lot appeared, marching anyhow, to the manifest disgust of the correspondent. Shortly WE appeared, swinging along in column of half-companies.

"Ah, these men are soldiers," said the penman.

This was overheard by some of our people who were standing outside the hotel, was duly reported, and greatly encouraged us.

Our C.O. never let an opportunity slip of showing off the Corps on any occasion when he knew we should do him credit, and a sound policy it was. There is no sense in hiding your light under a bushel!

Then, of course, there was the right royal time we had with the 2nd Life Guards at Windsor, in 1895. Of the many times when we were hospitably entertained at Easter time I do not think we ever had a greater reception. I was Mess President at the time, and on the first day we were there the L.G. Mess President came to me and said,—

"Look here, you are out doing field-work to-day, aren't you?"

I told him we were.

"What sort of a lunch would you like?"

Of course I replied that the modest sandwich was all we ever wanted or expected.

"What?" he said, "sandwiches? All right, I'll send you one of our race lunches."

Accordingly, in the middle of the day, half a dozen very big soldier servants turned up with a wagon containing hampers of every conceivable luxury in the way of comestibles, and champagne galore. I remember that there was a lengthy siesta before we got back to the field-work.

Oswald Ames, with whom I was at Charterhouse, was one of our hosts, and in the mess I found myself playing billiards with him—an awkward man to play with as, being the happy possessor of great height and a special cue, he was able to reach any point of the table without resorting to "jiggers," "half butts" or other accessories employed by the man of ordinary stature. The height from the top of the plume of Ames' helmet to the ground was, he told us, eight feet. He is well remembered by the "man in the street" as the officer who rode at the head of the procession at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A year or two afterwards I met him one day with his head bandaged, and asked him what had happened.

"Oh, chandelier," he replied casually, as though knocking his head against ceiling furniture was as common to him as tripping over the mat is to most people.

It was at this Easter with the Household Cavalry that our gallant C.O. made a well-remembered speech in presenting a silver bowl to the Life Guards' Mess.

"Colonel my Lord Dundonald and officers of the

2nd Life Guards," he said, " I have now the pleasant duty of asking you to accept this small token of our appreciation of the kindly and courteous manner in which you have received us here and the hospitality you have extended to us. May the friendship which has sprung up between the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of your regiment and the friendship which has sprung up between the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of my regiment, that is to say, the friendship between the two regiments,—er—ah—continue, and may this friendship, that is to say, this bowl, be a token of *bon camaraderieship* between us." (Loud, prolonged and noisy applause.)

It is still (or was, not many years since) known as the " bon camaraderieship " bowl in the Life Guards' Mess.

In May, 1884, I was offered, and accepted, a commission in the 6th Middlesex (St. George's) R.V., and in '86 became a captain in that regiment. At Queen Victoria's Jubilee, in 1887, I was commanding a company of the St. George's on Constitution Hill, where we had to put up with a lot of good-humoured chaff, one young woman calling out, " 'Ere, you with the sword ! " and then, when I looked round, " No ! not you ; I mean the good-looking one ! " I then found that the remark was addressed to my subaltern. It was a very hot day and some women in the crowd fainted ; in fact, it was so hot that a certain more or less august per-

sonage who was with the Royalties came ungummed from his saddle and was deposited in the road near us, to the great entertainment of the crowd. The Kaiser's father, the Emperor Frederick of Germany, was one of those attending the ceremonial, and a fine figure of a man he was.

When I first joined the St. George's the officers had only one garment (they had trousers as well, of course), a sort of glorified patrol jacket, and this resulted in our Major, when he attended a Levée for the first time, being held up before he reached the Presence, as he was, to the eye of the Court Official who halted him, improperly dressed. However, our C.O., Colonel Lindsay, an old Guardsman well known at Court, was quite equal to the occasion, for he called out in an angry voice, " Leave him alone, he's my Major ! " after which reprimand things went smoothly and the patrol-jacketed Major was allowed to proceed. Later, our dress in the St. George's was altered, and permission was given to adopt the uniform of the King's Royal Rifles or, as they were always called, " The 60th." The old 1st Middlesex R.V. (Victorias) was subsequently amalgamated with the St. George's, and when the Territorial Force was created, they became the 9th Battalion, London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles). As is well known, they did grand work in the war.

In 1888 I was out in Australia and New Zealand, and on my return in 1889 I resigned my commission

in the St. George's. In 1890 I began to feel sorry that I was out of it, and turned up at the Artists again with the intention of joining the ranks, but was offered a commission, and so, in '95, again became Captain and was given command of "E" Company.

In 1898 I again resigned, but rejoined in 1900 and took command of the cyclists, resigning in 1902, little thinking I should ever again be in the Artists. I do not think this history of my in-and-out wanderings is very interesting or creditable, and I only give it as a warning to my younger readers, the moral which I wish to inculcate being that when you are in a good thing it is wise to stick to it. This unusually erratic military career means, among other things, that I now hold four commissions, two signed by Queen Victoria, one by King Edward, and one by King George. The usual and proper method of progression in the Artists in pre-war days was to go through the various non-commissioned grades before thinking of a commission, and I shall always regret that I did not do this, but was tempted away by the offer of a commission in another regiment (albeit a good one) after only two years' service in the ranks. There is no doubt that this method of progression in the learning of a soldier's duties from private up to sergeant before taking a commission contributed very largely to the high reputation for discipline and general efficiency gained by the regiment before

the war; and I think that some of the best officers in the Artists have been those who have performed the duties of *all* the grades of non-commissioned rank before taking commissions.

As a Corps, the Artists were always keen on getting in touch with and, whenever possible, training with, the regular forces, and when given the option at Easter and other camps have always chosen to be brigaded with them. The Regulars invariably received us well and did everything not only to make our stay with them as pleasant as possible, but also to assist in every way in the training and instruction of the Corps. The aim of the Artists was to carry out all work as far as possible on Regular lines. When on duty, difference in rank was scrupulously observed—a private was a private (although he may have been a person of distinction in ordinary life) and he had to do all the work of a private, and this tradition was strictly maintained during the war. The men were not allowed to think that because they were in an Officers' Training Corps and had been selected for training for commissions, that they were budding cadets. They had to do all the ordinary routine work of a private soldier, and did not have waiters to look after them at their meals—the result being that when they arrived at a commission they knew the whole job from A to Z, and were able to correct and instruct their men in the smallest detail of camp routine, etc. Over and

over again during the war we had evidence as to the excellent results of our method of training in this respect.

When I went to the St. George's I did something to make up for having missed N.C.O.'s work in the Artists by doing a month, in company with a number of Militia officers, under drill instructors of the Guards at Wellington Barracks, and, shortly afterwards, went through and passed the ordinary school of instruction at the same place. Apropos of the said School of Instruction I wonder what some of our young up-to-date soldiers will say to the following method of forming a skeleton battalion for the novices to drill. A squad of, say, forty men in two ranks is paraded.

Sergt.-Major *loq.*: " Parade, 'shun! Number! No. 10, left of the right 'alf company—'alf companies, right wheel, double march—Rear rank of the left 'alf company, right about turn—Front rank of the right 'alf, rear rank of the left, forward —The 'ole, 'alt—Rear rank of the left 'alf company, right about turn—The 'ole, stand at aise" ; after which he reported to the Commandant that the parade was formed.

A somewhat painful experience followed at the practical examination in drill at the conclusion of the month's work at the School of Instruction. I was the last to be " put on " to show what I could do, and the Commandant said—

" Now, Mr. Blomfield, you are the last. Take

the company, march it back to our private parade, and go through any manœuvre you like on the way."

In those days, as also for some time afterwards, "sizing" was always very carefully adhered to, with the tall men on the flanks, and this fact nearly undid me, for having retired from the flanks of half-companies, broken off files, and gone through the various drill "stunts" of those days, I finally arrived back on the School private parade with the company inside out, and two enormous flank men sticking up in the middle.

"Thank you, very good, Mr. Blomfield," said the Commandant, but the School Sergeant-Major said—

"It's a good thing the Commandant didn't see those flank men in the centre, sir."

Result: I was awarded my p.s.

Even in those days (I am thinking of from 1890 onwards) we had men who were prepared for any kind of a "scrap." One very hefty and good-looking surgeon, full of Irish fighting blood, on one occasion was insulted, or thought he was insulted, by the driver of a "chariot" milk-cart or "float" (I mean one of those carts which were mobilized as ammunition carriers in 1914), whereupon he promptly gave chase, leaped into the back of the chariot and consolidated his position by "biffing" the milkman on the head. The latter whipped up his horse and the action disappeared down the Euston Road at a

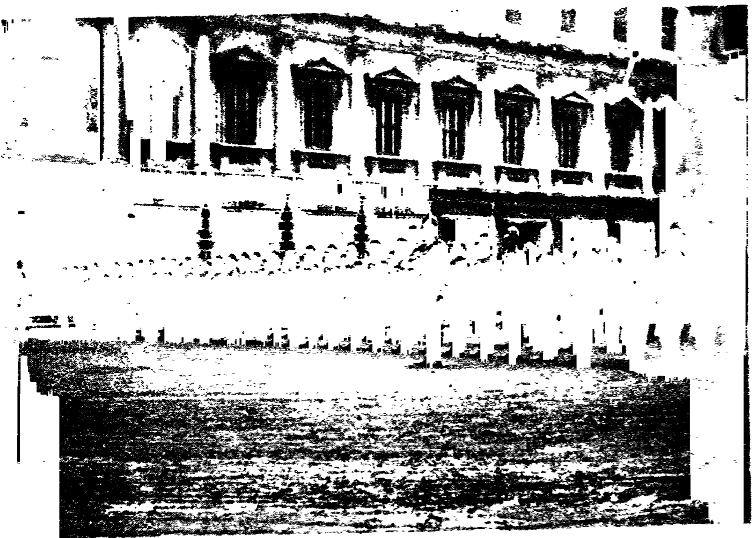
violent pace, until it was received out of our sight by the conglomeration of hansoms and other traffic of those days. I am not sure what the sequel was, but I fancy the hefty M.O. made it up with the milkman at a later date.

On another occasion, at one of our annual inspections in Hyde Park, the same medical officer arrived on the ground, where he had arranged to meet some lady friends to show them the glories of the Artists. He was informed by these ladies that, while waiting for him, they had been annoyed by a " horrid man " who was there as an onlooker.

" Ah, show him to me," said our big M.O., and at once got in with his left, and laid the " horrid man " out. The sequel this time was the police court, but I do not think any serious punishment followed, possibly owing to the fact that our fighting doctor was strongly supported by our C.O., who assured the magistrate that it was perfectly certain that " No officer of my regiment would think of taking extreme measures, in any shape or form, without the very greatest provocation."

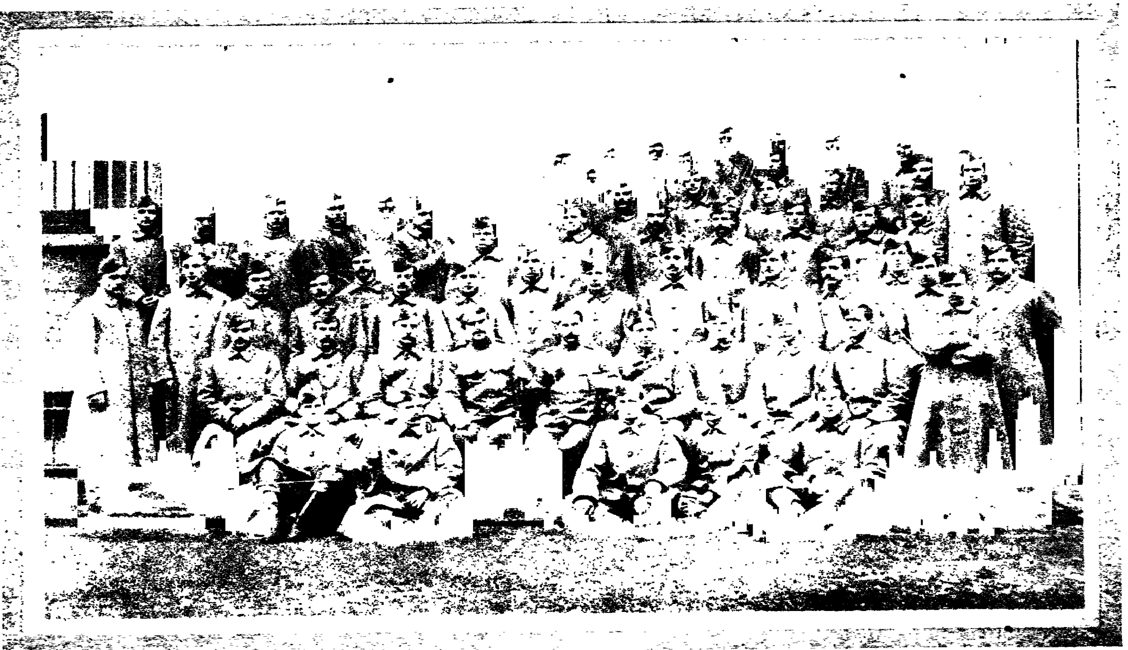
On another occasion, when marching with the battalion, an onlooker greeted him with " 'Ullo, eyeglass " ; and again our truculent M.O. laid out the speaker.

Apropos of milk-carts, I am reminded of Easter, '92, when we were with the Red Marines at Walmer —the Artists have always been pals with the Marines, and in the war the 1st Battalion fought



ACADEMY GUARD, 1897.

[To face page 48.



C.I.V. DETACHMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICA, 1900.

(To face page 4

alongside them in the 63rd Division. Their hospitality at Walmer was second to none, and they gave us the best of times. On one of the days during our sojourn at Walmer, we were in marching order for some sort of field-work and I was hurrying along to parade, with not too much time to spare, when I became aware of another hurrying subaltern, garbed as for a Levée, in full-dress tunic, patent leather boots, and generally covered with silver.

"Good Lord, Blummy, ain't I properly dressed?"

"No, old chap; you're wrong from top to bottom," I replied.

At that moment a milk-cart came across the square.

"Hi! Hi! you!" my friend yelled, "drive me to my quarters in —— Road, quick as you can, like a good chap."

And the appalling spectacle was then seen of a very ordinary milk-cart, with jumping and clattering cans, going hell for leather across the barrack square with a stout and beaming subaltern, uniformed, silvered and monocled, cannoning about among the cans and milk flippings, and urging the driver to do his utmost. On my arrival at the Battalion the C.O. wanted to know who the officer in the milk-cart was, whether he was practising some new form of drill, escaping from justice, or was "off his nut."

"It's only Brandon Thomas, sir, in the wrong order, gone to change," I said.

The C.O. said no more. The author of "Charley's Aunt" was much too popular with every one and valuable as an entertainer, for any serious notice to be taken of the irregularity.

It was during this Easter, also, that this celebrated actor and author, as Subaltern of the Day, had to inspect the guard. The news soon spread, and all the mess turned out to see him through it. Our entertainer strutted out, took the middle of the stage, screwed his eyeglass into position, and then, turning round to the admiring crowd, said—

"I say, you fellows, what do I do?"

Some one replied that he had better get on with the inspection; whereupon, with an extra bulge of the chest, and careful readjustment of the monocle, he shouted, "Guar-r-r-d!" and then forgot his part, with the result that the guard quivered with suppressed laughter, and no prompting was forthcoming, as everyone else present was in the same condition of hilarity. The sudden appearance of the Adjutant retrieved the situation, and under his stern eye a proper sense of gravity was restored.

Later, when attending the School of Instruction at Wellington Barracks, Brandon Thomas insisted on telling funny stories to the Sergeant Instructor who was initiating him into the mysteries of company drill, but this, of course, did not do at all, and a somewhat severe reprimand followed.

Our favourite yarn from Thomas was the one

known as "Aldershot," wherein he described his first camp when he was a recruit, and how, when carrying a pot of marmalade in one hand and a brace of kippers in the other, he met an officer in the lines and did not know whether to drop the marmalade and salute with the kippers or drop the kippers and salute with the marmalade.

He made friends with a private in an Irish militia battalion which was encamped next to us, and apparently induced him, by means of a monetary consideration, to act as a kind of batman by cleaning his boots and otherwise assisting him in his toilet. One night our actor thought he needed a change from camp fare, and he decided to go off and do himself really well at the Queen's Hotel, a hostelry well known throughout the Aldershot area. He entered the coffee room and shouted for a steak and a bottle of Burgundy. The waiter, much impressed, said—

"Beg parding, sir, but privates, of however distinguished a regiment, are not permitted to dine in the General Coffee Room."

"Good Lord, man," Thomas replied, "I'm not a general; I am, as you say, a private, so give me a private room."

In due course, in a comfortable after-dinner state of mind, he started to return to camp. He herring-boned down the road and, of course, lost his bearings. Suddenly he was challenged:

"Halt, who comes there."

"I am Private Brandon Thomas of the Artists," my friend replied, "my regimental number is——, and the number of my rifle is——"

"Halt, who comes there?"

"I have already told you that I am Private Brandon Thomas of the Artists, my regimental number is——, and the number of my rifle is——"

More fierce challenges followed, and at last, *sotto voce*,—

"Whoy don't ye say 'Frind'?" and Thomas then found that it was his unofficial batman.

Having learned the proper reply to a challenge, he felt equal to any future trouble, and shortly afterwards, when a gigantic Lifeguardsman loomed up in front of him and repeatedly challenged, he waited until he was quite close and then yelled "Friend!" at the top of his voice, whereupon the sentry replied—

"Pass, friend; all's well. What the hell's the matter with you?"

This ending to the story always brought down the house. Thomas kept us lively not only with stories, but also with many delightful songs of his own composing. He was, of course, our "star" performer in all entertainments given by the Corps, and with his cheery presence and fun was a valuable asset to the Artists.

The foregoing story of sentries reminds me of Woking, in 1891, when the whole camp was aroused at an unearthly hour by a succession of fierce

challenges, repeated again and again, followed at last by a conciliatory voice from the wood near by:

"It's all right, young gemman, I comes through 'ere every marnin'."

It was an old wood-cutter going off to his job. This story, by the way, was illustrated and appeared in *Punch.*

Easter, 1891, was a great occasion. We were at Winchester (H.Q. the George Hotel) imagining great things of ourselves as usual, although I came down a peg or two when two Regular officers passed me and remarked, "My God! what a kit!" I am sure they did not think I heard; but I did. I used to think when I was at the Depôt during the war what a sensation would be created if one could have turned out arrayed in the grey-braided patrol jacket and forage cap of those days, with white gloves and sword complete. It might have resulted in a revival of some of the comments we had to put up with in the old days, such as "'Ere comes another guy"; "When are they going to burn yer?" "Saturday night soldiers"; "Who shot the dog?" etc.

Easter Monday, '91, saw us parading in a blizzard at 6 a.m., and afterwards we entrained for Fareham, from which place we set out on one of the typical Easter Monday field-days, subsequently marching past the Duke of Connaught at 3 p.m., by which time we were getting rather hollow, or, in other words, badly in need of lunch. This meal had

been arranged with the Quartermasters' usual care and forethought and (which wasn't always the case) we knew where to find it. The orders on this particular occasion were that, after marching past, the different battalions were to proceed in column of route out of a gate at the south-west corner of the field in which the march past took place. Our gallant C.O., however, knew that this was the wrong direction for the lunch, so he ordered the leading company to disengage and lead the battalion towards another gate at the north-west corner of the said field. This stealthy manœuvre had scarcely begun when a galloper came tearing after us.

"Colonel—sir, you are to follow the other battalions out at that corner of the field"—pointing to the gate in the south-west corner.

"My lunch, sir, is awaiting me over there," replied our C.O.

"It's the Duke's orders, sir," replied the galloper, and forthwith returned to the Royal Presence. We carried straight on to the lunch, and why no one was executed or nothing else dreadful happened I have never clearly understood. Possibly it may be explained by the fact that our Colonel was a man of very commanding presence and, moreover, of a pushful nature, with a record at the War Office, and other places, of always getting his own way in matters connected with "My Regiment."

The lunch was an unqualified success; everything was of the best, supported by lashings of Benedictine, a favourite liqueur of the Mess in those days, and obtainable at a price which did not make you feel too much of a spendthrift if you imbibed a glass or, indeed, even if you ventured on two glasses. Anyhow, it was sound stuff on a cold day. Afterwards Private Brandon Thomas and others gave some strong and fruity songs, followed by a request from the Colonel for "One more rocket, gentlemen, please." For the benefit of the uninitiated I must explain that "rockets" were sent off as follows. A finger or two fingers, or more (according to the size of your fingers and more particularly of your mouth) were placed in your mouth to one side (port or starboard was immaterial), between your teeth and your cheek (due care being taken if you were rigged with artificial molars). You then moved your fingers rapidly up and down, at the same time emitting a hissing noise, and finally, as the rocket is supposed to start, you passed your hand up in front of your face, with a view to giving the impression of ascending noise. The next thing to be done was to slap your knees rapidly in imitation of the bursting fire-balls of the rocket. "Oh, what a beauty!" uttered rapturously was the next stage in the performance, followed as a finale by "Mind the stick."

This, I think, is a fairly accurate description, but

I am open to correction from my readers, many of whom have "rocketed" with the Corps and elsewhere. To those who have never seen a battalion of, say, 600 men "doing rockets," all I can say is that they have missed a most impressive affair.

After we had downed the great lunch and had enjoyed songs, recitations, and rockets, the band joined us and we swung off en route to Fareham, to entrain there again for Winchester, all very satisfied, happy, and full of beans. On the way a large 'bus, with three horses abreast, going in the same direction, tried to pass us on the near side. The battalion, however, foiled this fell intention by closing in to the left. Thereupon the driver, who was obviously the worse for wear (although I do not suppose he had had any Benedictine), pulled up until the tail of the column had passed him, and then came up on the proper side, got ahead of the band and pulled up short under a railway arch, with the obvious intention of stopping "those —— Volunteers." A subaltern ran out and tried to pull the horses to one side, whereupon the 'bus Jehu biffed him with his whip.

Enter the C.O.

"Who is this man who dares to strike an officer of my regiment? Arrest him!"

Promptly and quietly, four of our very finest and largest sergeants scaled the 'bus, took hold of the driver, folded him up like a two-foot rule, and stowed

him under the box-seat, one of them picking up the reins and driving the whole concern, passengers included, back to the police station.

Many of those who joined the Artists during the war may be interested to know that it was in 1891, too, that we were reviewed by the Kaiser on Wimbledon Common. We were about 20,000 Volunteers in all, and it was a great occasion. I can see him now, cantering on to the ground, followed by a " large and brilliant staff." We were drawn up in line of quarter columns, and the " All Highest " came along the different regiments. When he reached us, he said, " Who are these ? " " These are the Artists, sire," at which he grunted " Oh ! " and rode on. If he could have foreseen what we should one day achieve in providing officers to lead British soldiers against his vaunted army, he might have taken a greater interest in us.

On August 14th, 1894, the Kaiser was present at a review at Aldershot, and a small detachment of the Artists, who were attached to a Regular battalion of the Worcesters for manœuvres, were among those keeping the ground, and were given a post of honour at one angle of the Royal enclosure.

In 1910 the Grey Brigade (which included, besides the Artists, the Queen's Westminsters, Civil Service, London Scottish and the Kensingtons) were in camp at Minster-on-Sea, near Sheerness, for a fortnight, during which time a week's trek in company with two Regular battalions was under-

taken. These operations were witnessed by the German military attaché, who, in his report to his Government some days later, expressed the opinion that the Territorials were of no great account, with the exception of what he described as the "London Artists." Possibly he may have altered his opinion by now; at any rate, *we* know that they are all good. But, as a matter of fact, I believe it is true that the Artists was the only battalion on the trek in question, either Regular or Territorial, that came through without a single man falling out.

The unpopularity of the Kaiser in the year succeeding the Jameson Raid (Jameson, or, to give him his more familiar title, "Dr. Jim," was in the Artists at one time) was shown at a smoking concert given by the Corps in 1897, when loud and prolonged hissing and booing greeted any reference to Germany. A quick-change artist—who was, I may add, of Teutonic origin—impersonated several well-known characters. His representation of Lord Salisbury was greeted with loud applause, Mr. Gladstone had a qualified reception, while Bismarck was greeted with unmistakable approval; but the Kaiser had a remarkably bad time, and even the late Emperor Frederick had to share the unpopularity of his son. That popular performer, Charles Coburn, was not allowed to sing the chorus of his well-known "Two Lovely Black Eyes" in the language of the Fatherland, on the ground that the Artists

would have no truck with anything "made in Germany," and he raised another outburst of patriotic indignation by saying, before he rendered the same song in Dutch, that it was "by permission of President Kruger."

Among others who were in the Corps when I joined in 1882 were Val Prinsep, who, not long afterwards, became junior Major. Mounted, he impressed the crowd even more by his immense bulk than he had done as a foot-slogging Captain, with the result that, on a certain Saturday when we were on the march, one small boy yelled to another, "Blimy, Bill, if it ain't old Jumbo come back agine." For the benefit of my younger readers I should explain that "Jumbo" was a gigantic elephant, a denizen of the Zoo, who to every one's regret, particularly that of the children, emigrated to America.

Other contemporaries of mine in those early days were W. B. Wollen, the well-known painter, Frank Calderon, the animal painter, who was a corporal in "H" Company, and his brother Alfred, an architect, who went to Canada and turned up at the Depôt early in 1917 as a Captain of Canadian Infantry. Charles Fripp, the painter, was also an active member, although, like myself, he was in and out of the Corps several times. He was a special correspondent in the Zulu War of 1879 and was with the party who found the body of the Prince Imperial of France. At Aldershot, in

1893, I saw him presented to the Empress Eugénie who was visiting the camp. He was asked to describe to her the finding of her son's body—a trying experience for Fripp, but the Empress, in a charming way, put him quite at his ease and was intensely interested to hear what he had to tell her.

Captain Pennell Elmhirst, of the 50th Regiment, a well-known hunting man and author of *In a Grass Country*, etc., was Adjutant of the Artists when I joined, and I had the pleasure of corresponding with him in the early part of the war when, although a great invalid, he was interesting himself in food and comforts for prisoners of war in Germany; but shortly afterwards, with much regret, we heard of his death.

Elmhirst was succeeded in 1883 by Captain Charles Haggard of the Irish Rifles. As Colonel, he visited us at the Depôt early in 1915. After him, Captain Gore Browne of the 60th (K.R.R.) came to us as Adjutant and remained in that capacity until 1890. Always known as "G. B." he was deservedly popular and contributed much to the training and well-being of the Corps. "G.B." was succeeded by Captain Charles Lamb of the Rifle Brigade, also a popular Adjutant. He had two songs which he was always asked to sing on every possible occasion, one being, "All my Fancy Runs upon Nancy," and the other dealing with pig-sticking, the chorus running—

"Over the valley, over the level,
Through the dark jungle, ride like the devil;
There's another in front, and a boar as well,
Sit down in your saddles and ride like Hell,"

the last word being brought out *fortissimo*. A rather reserved man on most occasions, he was very fond of a joke, and on one occasion we were playing billiards at his club, the Naval and Military, when our present King (then Duke of York) came into the room, accompanied by an equerry. When we were out of hearing at the other side of the table, Lamb said to me—

"I say, what do we do?—present arms with our cues, or what?"

In the Boer War "G.B." was shut up in Ladysmith and Lamb was in the relieving force.

On one occasion, after one of our big smoking concerts, Lamb was going home in a hansom, accompanied by one of our subs (who afterwards became, and now is, a Benedictine monk—I have already remarked in another part of this book that the officers of the Artists were fond of Benedictine), when the horse bolted. After a mile at full tilt down the Brompton Road—it was early Ac Emma—the driver, who must have been more of a crock than his horse, opened the trap in the roof of the hansom and yelled down, "For Gawd's sake get 'old of 'im, sir, I can't stop 'im," whereupon Lamb seized the reins and putting all he knew into the job—he was pretty hefty—succeeded in pulling

up the runaway, our Benedictine sub being literally squashed flat in one corner of the vehicle by Lamb's movements and exertions. The sub, who was small and distinctly pretty, used severe and trenchant language and, as I have said, afterwards became a Benedictine monk—probably in a fit of remorse. One of our fellows visited him a few years since at the monastery where he is now incarcerated, and our monk received him with fitting solemnity and reverential demeanour, escorting the visitor and showing him different parts of the monastery. At length they arrived at the top of a tower which formed part of the buildings. After a good look round our monk suddenly said—

"Now, old chap, no one can see us," and pulling up his frock round his waist, he executed a neat *pas seul* in the very best Artists' manner. This evidence of "the old Adam" was, I need hardly say, very entertaining to his guest.

Talking of dancing, it is rather wonderful now to look back and recall some combined terpsichorean efforts of a certain well-known doctor of the Corps and myself. I am thinking more particularly of what we did in the Mess of the Red Marines at Walmer in 1892. Well, well, we were all young once!

Lamb's successors in the Adjutancy of the Artists' Rifles up to the outbreak of the war were:—

Captain Annesley, Rifle Brigade.

Captain and Brevet Major C. F. Romer, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Captain V. T. Worship, D.S.O., Royal Munster Fusiliers.

Captain E. H. H. Lees, the Border Regiment.

Lieutenant A. P. Blackwood, the Border Regiment.

In December, 1899, i.e., at that crisis of the Boer War when Buller had been checked at Colenso, Methuen at Magersfontein, and Gatacre at Stormberg, the Lord Mayor of London offered to raise a regiment of infantry, with mounted infantry attached, and to clothe, equip and transport them to Cape Town. This offer was accepted, the Commander-in-Chief reserving to himself the right to nominate the Lieutenant-Colonels and certain of the officers. Colonel the Earl of Albemarle, Civil Service Rifles, was given command of the Infantry, and Lieut.-Colonel Cholmondeley, London Rifle Brigade, of the Mounted Infantry. In July, 1900, leave was given for the Honourable Artillery Company to send a field battery to join the regiment. The command of the whole regiment was given to Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Mackinnon, and it was christened the City Imperial Volunteers, Lord Roberts consenting to become Honorary Colonel.

No fewer than forty-seven different Volunteer Regiments were represented in the infantry battalion, the total strength of that unit on landing in South Africa being 1,911. The largest number

from any one regiment was the Artists' detachment, numbering fifty-eight. The officers of the Artists who went with the detachment were Captain and Honorary Major R. W. H. Edis (son of Colonel Robert W. Edis) and Lieutenant B. Croft. Captain Edis was posted to the command of "F" Company. The infantry were sworn in at the Guildhall, the Artists being taken first, and all ranks received the freedom of the City of London. A most interesting *Journal of the C.I.V. in South Africa* was brought out in 1901 by Major-Gen. W. H. Mackinnon, Commandant of the Corps, dealing with the raising of the regiment, and a daily account of its work in the field.

In addition to the C.I.V. detachment, the Artists sent a number of men to different units of the Imperial Yeomanry, and one subaltern of the Corps, H. E. Edlmann (Major in our 1st Battalion during the Great War) resigned his commission in the Artists and went out as a Sergeant in the Sharpshooters, I.Y. He was severely wounded at Aberdeen. The Regimental Medical Officer with the C.I.V. was Surg.-Captain R. R. Sleman, of the Artists. Lieut. H. J. Scharlieb went out as a surgeon in the Langman Hospital, and was for this work awarded the C.M.G. Orderly-Room-Sergeant H. F. Hall went out as Quartermaster-Sergeant in the C.I.V. and gained the D.C.M.

Early in 1900 leave was granted to raise the establishment of the Artists from eight to twelve



COL. HORSLEY.

[To face page 64.



COL. MAY.

[To face page 6.

companies. The new companies were I, K, L and M. " L " Company was composed of cyclists and signallers, and " M " was machine guns. Captain Arthur Wagg (a former Quartermaster of the regiment) and his brother, Edward Wagg, presented two Vickers-Maxim guns with equipment complete. This very handsome present was much appreciated, and the guns were an important feature in the training for many years afterwards. In 1900 the head-dress of the regiment was altered, slouch hats being adopted in lieu of helmets. The latter were never either comfortable or practical, and the change was welcomed as a move in the right direction. In August, 1900, a Brigade Emergency Camp was formed for a fortnight's training at Aldershot, and was well attended. The Artists on that occasion had issued to them a service kit of khaki drill.

In December, 1902, Colonel Edis resigned his commission and the command devolved upon Lieut.-Colonel Walter Horsley, who had already put in twenty-eight years' service in the Corps, was thoroughly imbued with its traditions and interests, and well qualified to succeed Colonel Edis in the command. Under Colonel Horsley the work was carried on steadily in the following years, the reputation of the Corps, in all respects, being fully maintained.

Lord Haldane's scheme for converting the Volunteers into Territorials was launched in 1907. The

following is an extract from a leaflet issued by the War Office in November of that year :—

" The Territorial Force is authorized by the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907. This Act provides the necessary Constitutional Authority, by which the Force takes its place as an organized force of the Crown, commanded and trained by the Military Authorities, raised and administered by the County Associations. The Act also prescribes the condition of enlistment, service and discharge, regulates the period of training, and authorizes, subject to the sanction of Parliament, the embodiment of the force when the Army Reserves are called out on permanent service.

" The Territorial Force, as regards the conditions of service, is not dissimilar in its principles to the Volunteer Force. Enlistment into it is purely voluntary, and no Territorial soldier can ever be called upon to serve out of the United Kingdom in peace or in war against his will."

The War Office was anxious that the Artists should, when the conversion came about, become an Officers' Training Corps, but there was strong opposition in the regiment to this proposal, the view taken by members being that men joined the Artists because they were keen on soldiering, and not because they wanted to rush through to commissions. It was felt that such a change would alter the whole character of the Artists. The question was fought in a determined manner by Colonel

Horsley and, much to the satisfaction of the Corps, the War Office gave way, stipulating, however, that in the event of mobilization we were to provide 10 per cent. of our rank and file for commissions. In this connection it is interesting to note that, when the war came, we not only acted as an O.T.C., but provided something like twelve hundred per cent. of our original pre-war strength instead of the 10 per cent. stipulated for, with the result that men from the Artists were to be found in every regiment of our huge army.

This important question being settled, in 1908 the Corps settled down to adapt itself to the change. Unfortunately, a large number of men felt that they could not undertake the added responsibilities required of them as Territorial soldiers, and the resultant exodus from the Artists was considerable, as it was from all other corps. The difference in the conditions of service in the Territorial Force as compared with those of the old Volunteers was as follows:—A recruit in the Territorial Force had to enlist for four years instead of enrolling for an unlimited period, and to secure discharge before the completion of his engagement he had to give three months' notice and pay a sum not exceeding £5, whereas in the Volunteer Force he only had to give fourteen days' notice and pay a sum varying from 10*s.* to about £3. If the Territorial failed to attend for training as ordered he was liable to a fine of £5, but in the Volunteers he was only

liable for the capitation grant which he had failed to earn. The greatest and most important difference was that, whereas as a Volunteer he was only under Military Law when attached to, or acting as part of, the Regular Forces, in the Territorial Force he was under Military Law whenever he was being trained or exercised. The Volunteers could only be embodied in case of imminent national danger, or great emergency, but the Territorials were liable to be embodied as soon as the Army Reserves were called out on permanent service. Territorial soldiers were entitled to pay at Army rates while in camp, and married N.C.O.s were also granted separation allowance for their wives and families. Territorials were also entitled to the Government ration of bread and meat, or its equivalent in money. In the Volunteer Force a daily camp allowance of 2*s.* 6*d.* per man was paid to the C.O. to defray all the expenses connected with camp, including messing.

Enlistment into the Territorial Force took place in April, 1908. By May the transfer from the 20th Middlesex, Artists' R.V., to the 28th Battalion, the County of London Regiment (Artists' Rifles) amounted to 370 of all ranks, and by June 30th the battalion's numbers were higher than almost any other unit in the kingdom. Khaki service dress was now provided, in addition to the full-dress grey, and all clothing and equipment became the property of the public as represented by the

County Association. Great exertions were made in the matter of recruiting, and in January, 1910, the establishment of the Artists was raised from four to eight companies.

In September, 1912, Colonel Horsley retired after thirty-eight years' service in the Corps, during the last ten of which he had been in command. He was succeeded by Colonel H. A. R. May. The first Orders issued by the latter, dated January 1st, 1913, are interesting, as showing the struggles that were being made to keep the Territorial Force up to strength some twenty months before war broke out. It runs as follows :—

"The Regulations now permit a Territorial Battalion to enrol recruits to a total strength of 1,000 men, and I am very anxious, on taking over command, in order to provide for specialists and for wastage on mobilization, to make a good start by filling up all available vacancies with recruits of the same high standard as those enlisted during the last few years. I know of no satisfactory way of recruiting for our own particular unit except that of the personal introduction of recruits by past and present members of the Corps, each member, as hitherto, accepting full responsibility for all the recruits he introduces, and if I can secure the active and immediate co-operation of each individual man in the battalion, there is no reason why our strength should not be at once increased to the full numbers authorized.

"With this leaflet are enclosed two nomination forms, and I am asking each individual member of the Corps to think over all his acquaintances and friends and not rest satisfied until he has found and secured at least one eligible recruit. Bear in mind that Territorials are almost the only persons who are voluntarily doing their duty to their country, instead of thinking about it, talking about it, writing about it, or finding excuses to shirk it, and although it most certainly is not the fault of the Territorials, who are serving, but of those who are not serving that the force is not up to strength, if we want to increase the numbers of our unit we must, and can do it, by an immediate and united effort to be made, and not merely thought about, by each individual member."

Practice mobilization was carried out in April, 1913. In July, 1913, a review of the Territorials of the London District was held by H.M. the King in Hyde Park, in which the Artists fully maintained the reputation of the Regiment. Another practice mobilization was held at Headquarters on April 25th, 1914. The last Battalion Orders issued before the war are dated July 24th, 1914.

CHAPTER III

THE WAR. I

IF any one had prophesied, say in June, 1914, that in November of that year I should desert the profession of architecture and be back in the Artists at the age of fifty-two, spending all my time in the old Headquarters in Duke's Road, interviewing possible and impossible recruits, for over three years, I should have been prepared to swear that such a state of affairs was quite the last that was likely to come about. Certainly at the end of July, when I started off with my family for a holiday in North Wales, none of us thought that the world generally was to be turned upside down within less than a month.

Those darkening first days of August, however, were soon upon us with their doubts as to whether we were going to play the game, and then the relief of the welcome, though appalling, news, that we were in it up to the hilt. The effect upon the various holiday-making families was at once apparent, some of them returning home, while many of the young men went off to serve.

Letters from relations and others kept us posted as to various happenings in London; among other things my office reported that a church tower and spire recently completed at Felixstowe were to be at once pulled down, as either being "in the line of fire" or because they were "too much of a landmark." This seemed rather vague, but sounded like business; at any rate, it raised visions of a new job when the war was over, so I did not worry.

The fact that we were really at war was, I think, first brought home to us when we drove over one day in the car to Bangor and found pickets from a Territorial battalion guarding the tunnels and railway; and also when, on the way back, we were held up by another picket of Regulars' guarding the eastern approach to the Menai Bridge. These sights stirred me to action and resulted in an offer of my services to the Territorial Force Reserve. After an appropriate delay, a chilling reply was vouchsafed, regretting that my age was against me, but suggesting that I might like to join the National Reserve.

It then occurred to me that the Artists might be collecting old oddments like myself for a veteran battalion or something of the sort, and enquiries to that end elicited a kind reply from the C.O., Colonel May, stating, however, that there was nothing doing in that line. At last I succeeded in being taken on by the National Reserve and awaited orders, but nothing happened to interfere

with the remainder of our holidays. If we, and others, had realized that these were the last real holidays we were going to have for five years we might possibly have made more of them. On the other hand, if we could have foreseen what the war was going to mean to every one we should have enjoyed nothing.

As time went on and more and more people cut their time short and cleared off home, we experienced an increasing sense of being "out of it," and often wished ourselves back in London. However, we stayed out our time and eventually reached home again in the middle of September, when I at once reported to the National Reserve (into which, apparently, large numbers of old dug-outs like myself had drifted) and was informed that they had collected such a crowd of retired officers of all shapes, ages and services that they did not know what to do with them. But I continued to go about with the silver badge of the National Reserve obtrusively displayed in my button-hole, and actually took a salute one day, although I subsequently realized that it had been given to a full-blown general who had just passed behind me.

At last I found the Artists at Lord's—at Lord's! How little we thought in the old days, when we walked round at the Eton and Harrow and 'Varsity matches, and had our best top hats combed by the ladies' parasols, that such a sight would be seen; that the refreshment arbours round the

practice ground, in which, in days gone by, one had stuffed strawberries and cream, would be stacked with arms and neatly arranged kits. However, there I found the Battalion, looking keen and fit, and wondering what was going to be done with them next. They had been called back from the annual summer camp, on Salisbury Plain, were mobilized on August 4th, and billeted in the Council Schools in Manchester Street, Euston Road. Three weeks later the order came to move to Lord's. The Corps formed part of the then 2nd London Division. The other units of the Division, when mobilized, were sent into the country for training, but the Artists were kept in town to release a battalion of the Scots Guards which was ordered to the front to form part of the famous 7th Division of the British Expeditionary Force. To take over the duties of this battalion the Artists were moved a few weeks later to the Tower of London. Very careful plans for mobilization had been made by Colonel May some years before, and so, when the time came, the Artists were prepared.

The strength of the regiment on mobilization was under 700, but within a few days the battalion was recruited up to full strength, chiefly by old members of the Corps who came back in large numbers. The Artists were one of the first Territorial units to volunteer for service abroad, and the offer was accepted subject to the raising of a second battalion. Many of the officers and N.C.O.s of the 1st Batta-

lion were transferred to form the nucleus of the 2nd, and many thousands of applications for enlistment were received from all parts of the country. Owing to the fact that it was only a *battalion* which was authorized and not a brigade, little more than one in seven of the applicants could be admitted. If the future O.T.C. work of the Corps could have been foreseen and the enlistment of greater numbers authorized, a large quantity of men of the right type for commissions might have been collected. As it was, the greater part of those who could not be taken went off, enlisted elsewhere, and fought and died, as privates or N.C.O.s of other regiments.

This was before I rejoined, but I have been told that those early recruiting days afforded an extraordinary sight: a long queue of men in Duke's Road, extending round the corner into Euston Road, all clamouring to join. The officers detailed to carry on the recruiting picked out men after a few terse questions.

"Let's see, your name is——. Ah, you played for Blankshire last year. You might do."

"And you, why of course you are the International Rugger man, and you—I know, you rowed in the Cambridge boat last year—all right!"

In fact, the pick of the public schools and universities and the best and most sporting of the young manhood of the country seemed to be there. There were eight "blues" in "D" Company alone.

The result was that a very fine battalion was quickly raised and placed under the command of Colonel Walter Horsley, V.D., the former C.O. of the Corps, who had retired two years before. So keen were men to join that even those who could only be placed on a waiting list voluntarily started drill forthwith on the mere promise of being enlisted when there were vacancies.

A leakage of men going off to commissions very soon started, but there was no difficulty in replacing them with as many new men of the right stamp as were required. When I first saw the 2nd Battalion they were at work in Regent's Park and, with few exceptions, were in plain clothes and drilling in shirt sleeves ; in fact, it was many weeks before they were all clothed in khaki. Among them I discovered a former pupil of my firm, who had just rejoined and who, on account of his previous service, was in charge of and drilling a squad. Some eighteen months afterwards he rolled into our Depôt a full-blown Major, with crowns and spurs complete, and I respectfully saluted him, whereupon he took me out to lunch.

At the end of September, 1914, I was offered a company in the 2nd Battalion of the Kensingtons (13th London Regiment), and had decided to accept when, much to my chagrin, business objections arose and I had to decline. Then various forms of employment suggested themselves. Should I be an anti-aircraftsman, as suggested by a

fellow-member of the Royal Cruising Club, or a Special Constable, or merely an onlooker with a grievance? Finally, I was taken back in the old Corps as Depôt Officer and gazetted as Temporary Captain on November 9th, 1914, which appointment was approved by my firm, it being thought that as a "Khakitect" with a job in London, I might keep half an eye on business and help to ward off the débâcle which threatened the noble profession of architecture. Vain hope; no calling was harder hit by the war.

Previous to this, the 1st Battalion had been moved from the Tower of London and ordered to rejoin the remainder of the 2nd London Division, which was in training near St. Albans and Watford, and the men were billeted in the neighbourhood of Bricket Wood. A few days later, however, orders were received to proceed to the front. The order came by telephone, and our C.O. understood that he was to proceed at once to Barnes, but on making further enquiries he realized that *France* was the destination and not Barnes!

Lieut.-Colonel Eaton Ostle, M.C., at that time a subaltern, has told me that leave had been granted to various men in the battalion on Saturday October 24th, and that, as he was paying his company, an urgent message came from the C.O. that he was required at Headquarters. His company was quartered at Fortune's Farm, together with the Quartermaster's Staff and stores.

He sent for a horse, as Headquarters was two miles away, but within ten minutes another urgent message arrived and this time a car was sent. On arriving at Headquarters he was told by the C.O. to prepare to go to France at once, and that all men were to be recalled. No further orders were received.

New rifles were issued to the Quartermaster's stores and to "F" Company, while various stores were dumped at Fortune's Farm and issued to the various companies on the Sunday morning. On Sunday, at midday, orders were received to take the Transport to Deptford, re-equip, and catch the train leaving Waterloo Station at 9.10 a.m. on the Monday. On account of the Transport being thus withdrawn, it was arranged that the A.S.C. should collect all kits, and a start was made (in a heavy downpour of rain) with the whole of the Transport. Some difficulty arose in getting pack-horses from the various companies and two horses only arrived as the column was leaving Watford. The men in charge were not Transport men and knew nothing about horses, but as there were no other men available they had to carry on. Deptford was reached at 6 a.m. and breakfast obtained there, and the Transport, having been equipped with new horses and wagons, subsequently arrived at Waterloo. The whole of the loading up had to be done by men of the Transport, as no assistance could be obtained from the railway

company. Two Staff Officers from the War Office were on the platform and strafed Ostle heavily because he was ten minutes late in being ready to move off. He explained that the delay was owing to men having been sent off to obtain food for the rest of the day, and the senior officer remarked that when Ostle arrived in France he would find it more important to be punctual than to send men for food—an excellent illustration of how, in the army, the more strenuous your job, and the more successfully you struggle with it, the more you are liable to be cursed.

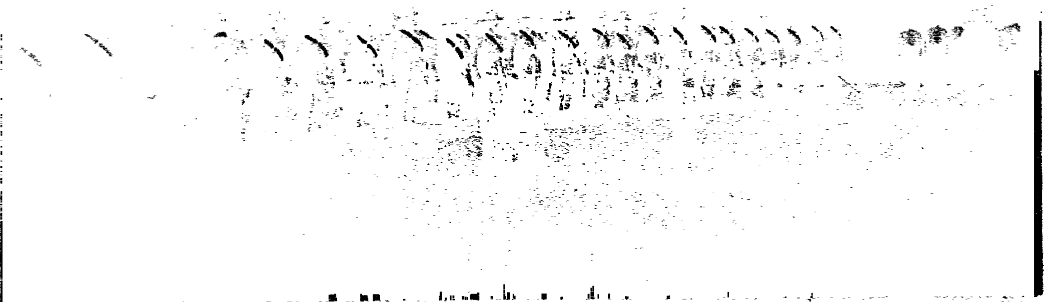
The Battalion left for Southampton on October 26th, sailing from there on the 27th, and disembarking at Boulogne on the 28th. On arrival at Boulogne they were at once sent on to the British Headquarters at St. Omer, but left that place on the same day by march route, Headquarters and four companies stopping at Helfaut, the remainder proceeding to a village called Bilques, two miles beyond Helfaut. All were billeted on the villagers. Field training was carried on until November 4th, and on the 5th the Battalion departed by motor-bus with the H.A.C. for Bailleul, expecting to be sent to Ypres. On arrival at Bailleul the O.T.C. career of the regiment started, for Colonel May was asked by Lord French to select fifty of his rank and file as officers for the 7th Division, which had suffered heavy casualties in the first battle of Ypres. The fifty young men selected joined the

7th Division, in privates' uniforms, within a few hours, the only indication of their new rank being stars placed on their shoulder straps. The experiment proved highly successful, and the Battalion was asked to furnish from its ranks (after special training) a regular flow of officers to the Regular infantry regiments of the British Expeditionary Force.

Lord French's despatch of February 2nd, 1915, contained the following:—

"I established the Battalion as a Training Corps for Officers in the Field. The cadets pass through a course which includes some thoroughly practical training, as all cadets do a tour of duty of forty-eight hours in the trenches, and afterwards write a report of what they see and notice. They also visit an observation post of a battery or group of batteries and spend some hours there. A Commandant has been appointed and he arranges and supervises the work, sets schemes for practice, administers the School, delivers lectures, and reports on candidates. The cadets are instructed in all branches of military training suitable for platoon commanders. Machine-gun tactics, a knowledge of which is so necessary for junior officers, is a special feature of the course of instruction.

"When first started the School was able to turn out officers at the rate of seventy-five a month. This has since been increased to one hundred.



INSPECTION. 1901.

[To face page 8?.



ROYAL NAVAL AND MILITARY TOURNAMENT, 1905.
20th Middlesex "Artists" R.V.

To face page 81.

"Reports received from Divisional and Army Corps Commanders on officers who have been trained at the School are most satisfactory."

All the cadets for this School were originally supplied by the Artists' Rifles.

The following appeared in Battalion Orders of December 13th, 1914 :—

"The C.O. is gratified to receive a report from the G.O.C. 7th Division that all the probationary officers have been reported on by their respective C.O.s as very good, and as having performed very useful service, and their commissions have been recommended to date as from the 13th November, the date of their leaving the Corps. The G.O.C. 7th Division reported to Headquarters 4th Army Corps that the system of attaching men from the Artists' Rifles to Battalions in his Division has met with such success that he has been applied to by C.O.s in his Division for thirty-six more such officers, and that he has no fear that the next batch will in any way be inferior to the very satisfactory first batch."

During December the Battalion, two companies at a time, went into the trenches for a tour of instruction, and the training of men for commissions was continued at Bailleul until the end of March, 1915. On the 2nd of April the Battalion left Bailleul by motor-bus and proceeded to St. Omer, where they were quartered in the French barracks. About 100 men were detailed daily

for G.H.Q. guards and examining posts. At first the guards furnished for the Commander-in-Chief and General Staff were commanded by officers, but this was subsequently discontinued.

Various men serving in the Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers, A.S.C., R.A.M.C. and branches of the army, other than Infantry, who had been selected for commissions, were attached to the battalion for training in infantry work prior to their course at the infantry cadet school. The Battalion also had the task of supplying from time to time men to be trained to act as Sergeant Instructors at the famous Machine Gun School in France, upwards of 100 such instructors (nearly the whole staff of the school) being furnished by the Artists. All of this was in addition to the regular supply of officers, the training in connection with the latter being steadily carried on and the men being despatched to the cadet school which had been moved from Bailleul to Blondecques—about four miles from St. Omer. Detachments also had to be found for advanced G.H.Q. at different places.

As an instance of the resourcefulness characteristic of the Battalion it is of interest to know that shortly after they arrived in France they were in a town where the electric light installation had broken down. The Mayor was told that he had better apply at once to the Artists, as they always had plenty of men who could do anything, so on parade the order was given :—

"All consulting Electrical Engineers—Slope arms!"

A number of men sloped arms, from whom one was chosen, and told to fall out and re-establish the electric light. This he did in a few hours and reported back to the Battalion.

At the end of December, 1915, Colonel May had to return to England on account of ill health, and the command devolved on Colonel S. Chatfield Clarke. About the same time the Commander-in-Chief, Lord French, returned to England, and the following announcement appeared in *The Times* of December 27th, 1915:—

"Sir John French on his departure from France paid a tribute to the Artists' Rifles (O.T.C.), which furnished his Guard of Honour. He said:

"Officers and men, it is singularly appropriate, and nothing could give me greater pleasure, than that your regiment, the Artists' Rifles, should be the last British troops that I shall see in France. You have done wonderful work since you came out, and you have furnished some of the finest leaders of the army from your ranks, and in doing so, you have suffered perhaps greater losses than any other regiment out here. You have done great work and I have no doubt you will continue to do so till the end of the campaign. I am very pleased that the Guard of Honour on my leaving France should be supplied by the Artists' Rifles.

"I wish you good-bye and good luck."

In the meantime orders had been received to raise a third battalion of the regiment and this was accordingly done, and the command given to Lieut.-Colonel W. Shirley, formerly of the Indian Army and of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. For some time the preliminary work of this battalion was carried on in London, but in May, 1915, they were sent to Richmond Park, where they lay under canvas alongside the 2nd Battalion, which had for some time previously been in billets at Highbeech and afterwards at Roehampton. Drafts from the 2nd were sent out at intervals to the 1st Battalion in France, and as all recruiting was now for the 3rd Battalion, the 2nd was rapidly reduced in strength, and ultimately had only home-service men left. Provisional battalions of the latter were formed about this time, and home-service men of the H.A.C., London Scottish and Artists' were formed into the 104th Provisional Battalion under Colonel Horsley and were moved to the Tower of London, the 3rd Battalion moving to Highbeech. On the introduction of the Military Service Act home-service men became liable for general service, with the result that most of the Provisional Battalions came to an end. Later, in 1915, the 3rd, which had now become the 2nd Battalion, took over quarters at Gidea Park near Romford, consisting of some very good huts which had been erected for the Sportsmen's Battalion when the corps bearing that name was

raised, Headquarters being at Hare Hall. A Cadet School on similar lines to the school in France was established in connection with the 2nd Battalion and was quartered at Gidea Hall, close to Hare Hall, and after a short time was officially designated No. 15 (Artists' Rifles) Officers' Cadet Battalion, and was placed under the command of Colonel E. St. L. Shaw of the East Surrey Regiment. For a considerable time this cadet school only received those men who had passed through the 2nd Battalion. Later, when it was decided to increase the number of commissions given to men who had seen service at the front, a number of men from different units who had been recommended for commissions were sent to No. 15 O.C.B. for training, until in August, 1917, half the strength of the school was composed of these men from overseas.

Shortly after the raising of the 3rd Battalion a number of N.C.O.s of the 1st Battalion in France came home and were given commissions in the 3rd (afterwards the 2nd) Battalion. As these N.C.O.s were all men of considerable experience, and some of them with many years' service in the Corps, the resulting advantages were at once manifest, and there is no doubt that these officers contributed very largely to the excellent work and training carried on by the Battalion and Cadet Battalion at home.

While the then 3rd Battalion was at Highbeech

in 1915, they were notified that an inspection by the G.O.C. the London District was imminent. Warning of the day and hour duly came, and in trepidation the Battalion awaited the arrival of this well-known General. In due course he appeared and started by cursing the C.O. because the "present" was given too soon, i.e., while he (the General) was still on the path surrounding the parade ground, instead of waiting until he had got on to the turf. He then proceeded systematically to strafe every one.

"Look at that man's face—do you mean to tell me that he'll make an officer?—and look at that filthy bandsman, damn it all, and everything and everybody," etc., etc.

The telephone at the Depôt brought a message from Camp:—

"The General has been here and has cursed and condemned everything and everybody and is now on his way to the Depôt, so look out!"

An urgent message was at once despatched to Regent's Park, where the recruits were drilling, calling them back to the Depôt, and at last we got them all back into the hall and tremblingly awaited the General's advent. After about an hour and a half I thought we had better make enquiries, and accordingly rang up District Headquarters.

"What's that?—the General inspecting you to-day?—certainly not!"

So we cursed Camp for liars and dismissed. However, the next morning we got a message that he really was coming and so we paraded in the drill hall again. The General arrived, and as soon as he got into the building began finding fault with everything.

"Each platoon when I have inspected it will stand at ease and stand easy. Now then, what did I say ?—that leading platoon is not standing easy, the men are standing badly at ease—don't you know the difference between standing at ease and standing easy ?"

I thought that all this foreshadowed a bad report on the Depôt, but as I walked up the hall with the General, he said,—

"Well, I don't know what sort of officers they will make, but as private soldiers they will be magnificent, and the turn out is excellent."

This cheered us up a lot.

"Now I should like to see the men separately."

Whereupon, having conducted him to my room, we had a number of men brought in, in succession.

"Let them take off their caps when they come in, so that I can see what they are like.

"What are you ?"

"Chartered accountant, sir."

The first six men were all of that calling.

"Are they *all* chartered accountants ?" said the General; and then, to the next man,—

"Are you an accountant too ?"

"No, sir, a planter."

"Oh, what do you plant?"

"Bananas, sir."

"Good God, what, in Hyde Park?"

"No, sir, in Jamaica."

We all laughed tentatively and judiciously at this, and the General then became quite genial.

"Well, now that I have had an opportunity of inspecting the men quietly and having a word with them, which I could not do in camp, I must say that I am entirely satisfied with the type of man you are taking and am very pleased."

After the trouble Camp got into, this was very gratifying, and I thought, "Here is a chance for Charles," so I said,

"Very pleased you think so, sir, as I selected all the men you have seen."

"Ah, indeed, very good, congratulate you."

Exeunt General and A.D.C.

This General is a celebrated "nut," or, as we should have said years ago, a "masher," and at a big concert which the Corps gave at the London Opera House in 1915, he appeared on the stage as an "extra turn" to deliver an address. A certain well-known cricketer (who was also an officer in the Army) was with my party, and when the General came on he yelled out,—

"Hullo, Harry Tate, by gad, splendid!" and proceeded to applaud vociferously.

"Shut up, you ass!" I said. "It's the General?"

"General be blowed, it's Harry Tate, I tell you. Ha! Ha! Splendid! Good old Harry Tate. Haw! haw! haw!"

But it *was* the General and the celebrated cricketer's applause gradually petered out.

"My *aunt*, do you think he heard?" he said.

Colonel Shirley continued to command the 2nd Battalion at Hare Hall Camp, Romford, up to the summer of 1918, when he retired on account of ill health. He inculcated very strict discipline and was awarded the C.M.G. during his tenure of the command. He was succeeded by one of our own officers, Lieut.-Colonel H. K. Eaton Ostle, M.C., who was a subaltern in the Corps at the outbreak of war, and did well on the Western front, where he commanded a battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment, a d was, when a Company Commander of the 2nd Battalion Border Regiment, in 1915, awarded the M.C. for a signal act of bravery in digging out, under heavy fire, men who had been partly buried.

Another old pre-war Artist, and a Captain in the Corps at the outbreak of war, who did extremely well in France, is Colonel C. F. H. Greenwood, D.S.O. He was always a keen soldier and served in the C.I.V. in the South African War. He was busy at the front commanding a battalion of the 22nd London Regiment and was not therefore available for the command of the 2nd Batta-

lion of the Artists when Colonel Shirley retired.

G.H.Q. having been moved from St. Omer to Hesdin, the 1st Battalion departed on the 15th of May, 1915, for the latter place by motor-bus. On arrival there one company was sent on to Montreuil to furnish G.H.Q. duties, this detachment being increased later to two companies, "C" and "D." No duties were found at Hesdin with the exception of the Quarter Guard. "B" and part of "A" Company were at advanced G.H.Q. at Beauquesne for several months. During the winter of 1916–1917 all available N.C.O.s and men were employed on railway work, doubling the French line from Montreuil to St. Pol.

In the spring of 1917 the 1st Battalion was informed that as it was gradually acquiring a lot of men who were not going to take commissions, it would, before long, be sent into the line, and accordingly, on June 25th, 1917, Headquarters and "B" and "D" Companies proceeded to Arras on transfer to the 63rd Division as a fighting unit, followed by "A" and "C" Companies on July 2nd, being relieved at Hesdin by the H.A.C.

On September 24th a move was made from Arras to La Coute, to Reitweld on October 3rd, thence on October 18th to Houtkerque, and on the 24th to Ypres (Passchendaele sector).

In due course we heard that the Battalion had "gone over the top" on October 30th and had suffered 313 casualties. Three days later we

learned that five officers had been killed and three wounded. Major Edlmann was in command during this fight; shortly afterwards he came home and visited us at the Depôt, when he gave us particulars.

Colonel Chatfield Clarke, who had been with the 1st Battalion since October, 1914, returned home on November 2nd, 1917, Colonel Harrington, D.S.O., of the Rifle Brigade, being appointed to succeed him. Colonel Clarke is one of the old Artists, having joined the Corps in 1882, and held every rank from private up to Lieut-Colonel. He took over the command of the 1st Battalion when Colonel May came home, and had reached the age of fifty-three when he handed over to Colonel Harrington.

I had intended embodying accounts of the fighting of the 1st Battalion, from Passchendaele onwards, and at my request most interesting accounts were kindly furnished by a number of our officers who took part therein, notably an admirable story by Colonel R. H. Goldthorpe, D.S.O., who was sent to, and commanded, the 1st Battalion from September 18th, 1918, to the end of the war. On consideration, however, I feel that these excellent descriptions of the real business side of things, i.e., the fighting, should be produced separately from this book, and hope that my attempt to chronicle some of the doings of the Artists "in the push" may serve to arouse

interest in the more serious official history of the Regiment which it is hoped to produce, and in which the above-mentioned stories of the fighting will be found.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR. II

WHEN I reported for duty at the Depôt in November, 1914, I was at once ordered to take up the recruiting for the original 2nd Battalion, and continued taking men for that unit until instructions were received in 1915 to raise the 3rd battalion, after which all recruits were posted to that unit.

As there were plenty of officers available for duty when I joined, and the O.C. 2nd Battalion was anxious to inspect various camps, trench digging operations, etc., I found myself detailed to drive him and his Adjutant to different places in my car, which toy, new in May, 1914, I subsequently disposed of in a panic in 1915 at half its original cost, instead of awaiting a later period in the war when I might have done extremely well with it. However, we might many of us have been millionaires if we could have foreseen events! This sort of authorized joy-riding made a welcome

change from Duke's Road until things began to boil up and constant attendance at the Depôt became necessary.

There was a Depôt Officer before I was gazetted, but the recruiting had been carried on by several officers in turn and, owing to want of room in our own building, a basement flat next door had been temporarily taken and was used for recruiting purposes. In the early days of the war the Depôt, which was, of course (and is now again), our peace-time Headquarters, was entirely inadequate in the matter of accommodation for the work which had to be performed there, and it is wonderful how we managed as well as we did. Probably it was only the never-failing *esprit de corps* and general give-and-take which made it possible.

The work devolving on the Depôt Officer at that time was practically confined to recruiting, and the correspondence accompanying it, but as time passed more and more returns and Army Forms were invented, in order that the Depôt Officer might not be idle; and whereas at first one had to sign one's name two or three times on one paper for one recruit, these documents, owing to the inventive genius of the War Office, gradually multiplied until each recruit had to be described on some half-dozen papers, and the unfortunate O.C. Depôt had to sign his name fourteen times. We often used to agree that if the ordinary business of an office in civilian life was conducted on army

lines, nothing in the shape of business transactions would ever materialise. The waste of time, all allowances being made for unavoidable improvization and amendments as the war proceeded, was certainly amazing.

The aforementioned basement flat, or " dug out," as it was of course called, was not an elevating or cheerful place, especially when, after a time, it became necessary to surrender the best room to one of the medical officers, and the Depôt Officer was relegated to a diminutive kitchen at the back, ill lighted by gas which had to be reinforced at intervals by dropping pennies in the slot. More than once, when staying late, I was caught with nothing but a half-crown and a threepenny bit in my pocket. Moreover, the restricted area of this kitchen made it difficult to see what an applicant was like, and a man does not look his best when he is either backing against a dresser or barking his shins on a gas cooker.

The Depôt Staff when I was appointed consisted of one sergeant, one corporal, and four privates, and there was plenty of work to keep them fully occupied. I at once laid it down that all applicants were to be treated courteously, and that if for any reason we decided not to take them, the rejected ones were to be sent away smiling, if possible, or, if they could not be made to smile, at any rate that they should be dismissed feeling that they had been properly treated at the Depôt of

the Artists' Rifles; and this rule was, I believe, consistently carried out. Occasionally a man had to be treated rather differently; if, for instance, he let it be seen that he thought he was conferring a benefit on the regiment by offering to join it. Later in the war, however, when we began to get applications from the genuine conscript who only came to us because he had to join something, and chose the Artists because he thought it was a soft spot (which it wasn't), our well-established urbanity and suavity became rather frayed at the edges and some straight talking ensued.

Having shelved one's own business in order, as events proved, that one might sit for four and a half years in Duke's Road interviewing for a great part of that time an interminable succession of applicants, it became somewhat irritating in the second half of the war when single men of about thirty appeared and explained that they were unable to join before because it would have meant leaving their business, and it often ended in their being told that "it was a good thing some of us made up our minds to chuck our business in 1914," to which remark they had not anything much to say.

In making the foregoing remarks I am thinking of the men who might have joined at an earlier date had they wished. Of course, we all know that there were a lot of desperately hard cases



COL. CLARKE.

[*To face page 96.*



[To face page 97.

among the men called up under the Military Service Act, for example, the case in which two men were in partnership—one of whom volunteered to serve, leaving the business in the hands of the remaining partner, who was eventually called up—after which the business had to go.

The officer who was conducting the recruiting in the early days of the war, before I rejoined, tells me that one day a very rotund person presented himself for enlistment. When asked what his calling in life was, he replied,

"Orchid grower."

The R.O., having interviewed candidates belonging to most of the other callings in life, was much interested and said,

"I'll take you if the doctor passes you."

The medical verdict was that his heart was out of gear, as a result of cigarette smoking, whereupon he undertook to eschew the habit, was accepted, sent out to France, and invalided home. A short time after the R.O. had joined the Battalion in France a draft arrived from England. On going round his rooms in barracks to see how the new men were shaking down, the officer stopped in front of a very thin man and asked if he had ever had a brother in the Corps.

"No," said the thin man, "but I'm the Orchid Grower, only I haven't been in a hot-house since you recruited me."

He became a company cook, and an excellent

one at that. Just before the attack on Passchendaele the C.O. ordered that all cooks were to remain behind. The Orchid Grower, however, came and stoutly protested to his company commander that he joined to fight and not to cook. He was thereupon allowed to go over on condition that he got quite clean. He was a real sportsman, and it is sad to record that he was killed in action in 1918.

One day a terrific swell presented himself: top hat, white waistcoat slip, white spats, etc.; and I thought, well, here is something at last.

"And what may your calling be?" I enquired.

"Ladies' blouse-maker, sir. A most important and flourishing business and attained, under my management, to a business of considerable importance, sir. In fact, I may say, without boasting, that if it had not been for me the business would never have attained its present important position. The business, I may tell you——"

"Thanks, very interesting, but that's enough about the business," I interpolated.

"What is your father?"

"Well, as you will see, I have put him down as a farmer, sir; but he was also—I really hardly like to say it—but he was also '(whispered)' a butcher."

"Ah," I said, "that's better than a ladies' blouse-maker, isn't it? I see your father sent you to a good school—what is the matter with his being a butcher? If he had been a burglar I

could understand your wishing to keep it dark. If your father's calling is an honest one, you ought to be proud of him. Anyhow, we don't want men in the Artists who are ashamed of their fathers' calling," and I then proceeded to give him my views on things generally.

As an antidote to the ladies' blouse-maker, two nice-looking lads applied for enlistment one day, and after a short talk, during which I ascertained that their views on life generally were sound, I decided to take them. Having done so, I was at once tackled by a stiff-necked critic,—

"I say, Blummy, do you know what you've done?"

"Well, what's the matter now?"

"Why, you've taken the two sons of Wild Duck, the poulterer—*you* know, round in Turkey Lane."

"If I have taken them," I said, "they are all right. You leave 'em alone."

In due course the two privates Wild Duck went to camp. On the approach of Christmas they approached (through the proper channel) their company commander.

"You know who we are, sir,—the sons of Wild Duck, the poulterer, in Turkey Lane. Father is awfully busy and we want to know if we can have two days' leave to help in the shop."

Leave granted. In comes the stiff-necked critic again.

"I say, Blummy, do you know there are two fellows in the Artists' uniform hanging turkeys in Wild Duck's shop?"

"Yes," I said, "I know, and they're hanging them jolly well, and helping their father. Don't you worry, that's not going to damn the Corps; you leave 'em alone."

After Christmas they reported back to camp, where they continued to do very well, presently passing to the Cadet School, and subsequently both obtaining their commissions. One of them gained the M.C. and the other lost a leg.

The constant interviewing of applicants for hours on end was a trying and somewhat exhausting job, and although, later on, I settled more or less as a square man into a square hole, there were times when I wondered whether I should be able to stick it. At the end of a long day of interviewing I sometimes wished that I had adopted the alternative of becoming a special constable, or had taken up some form of less continuous work, although, as events turned out, I am not sure that a special constable's job was not more trying.

Owing to the great number of applicants to be interviewed it was possible, as a rule, to devote only a few minutes to each man, and the difficulty of making up one's mind in that time as to an applicant's suitability for training for a commission was considerable. Mistakes in selection were, of course, made, but this would, I think, have been

the case whoever had been detailed to carry on the interviewing.

Some weird applicants presented themselves at times, but only two of them, as far as I could tell, could be actually classed as lunatics. The first rolled in during the earlier days of the war when we were carrying on our job in the basement flat already referred to. I was alone in the front room of that dug-out when the orderly pushed in a great hefty lump of a fellow who advanced towards me in a hesitating sort of manner, rolling his eyes in a curious fashion.

"You wish to join this regiment?" I said, to which he whispered,—

"Yes."

"Any previous service?" I asked.

"Yes."

"You have?—well, what were you in?"

"The Rifle Brigade."

"Ah, a splendid regiment!—how long were you in the Rifle Brigade?"

"A week."

"That isn't very long—why did you leave them after a week?"

"I didn't think they wanted me; I didn't want to be in anybody's way."

By this time I had become aware that I was closeted with a powerful lunatic and that he barred my line of retreat, so concluding that the proper tactics were to temporize, became as soothing as

I could. After engaging him in child-like talk for a time, I suddenly said,

"Wouldn't you like to go up and see the doctor?"

This suggestion bucked him up quite a lot and, watching my opportunity, I was able to manœuvre round him, call the orderly, and despatch the looner up to the doctor. Shortly afterwards I had occasion to go up and see the doctor on other business and found him in the small canteen on the first floor of our own building surrounded by medical orderlies and men in various states of nudity.

"Well," I said, "did you see my looner?"

"Your what?" said the M.O.

"Why, that big, burly person."

"Oh yes, of course, yes, I saw him all right."

"Well," I said, "he *is* a looner, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes, he's a looner all right, and, physically, a very fine man too."

"Ah," I said, "exactly, I thought so. What did you do with him? Pushed him away, I suppose?"

"Oh no, not at all. I told him to come back in a fortnight."

"Great Scott!—told him to come back in a fortnight!" I said, aghast.

"Yes, it is only temporary melancholia, probably."

"Well," I replied, "all I can say is that if he comes back, and I have to see him again, he comes to me with a strong escort."

By this time all the orderlies were grinning and

the nude applicants were shaking like pink blanc-manges. A fortnight later the hefty looner reappeared, and proceeded straight to the M.O., who made him skip, which I am informed (I am an architect and not a doctor) is a *de lunatico* test. My big balmy friend missed fire at the third hop, or back fired, or did something wrong which the M.O. said was indisputable proof that he was *non compos*. He was gently told that he could not be taken and we saw no more of him.

In the case of looner No. 2, we were back in our own building, and due warning was sent down from the department where the preliminary interviews and siftings were carried on, that a man, thought by the interviewing sergeant to be "rather funny," was coming down; and presently the subaltern who was helping me at that time said,

"Hark, what's that?"

We then heard a sound of wailing in the hall, accompanied by some soothing words from the orderly on duty. This was followed by the entry of an enormous man who barged in and stumped solemnly round the edge of the room, halting with a flourish of his stick, up against the, by this time, alarmed subaltern.

"I have come to join the Artists' Rifles," yelled the big man, punctuating this announcement with a vigorous bang of his stick on the floor, "and I have brought a letter from the Under Secretary of State for War!"

After some more shouting and flourishing he was suavely informed that the War Office would be communicated with.

"Aha! what ho!—then what am I to do in the meantime, eh? Do I remain in London or return to Scotland? Answer me that!"

We concluded that the further he was away the better it would be for us, so he was told that the best plan was to return to Scotland at once, that London was very full and in any case was a terribly expensive place to live in, upon which, after some final stick exercises and flourishings, he retired, according to plan, all round the room, joyously shouting himself out of the building; after which we heard no more of him.

One long-haired applicant was very insistent on being the right man for the Corps—as a musician—admitting, however, that he had never gone in for games or sports of any kind, as he had "to devote the whole of his time to studying his art."

"Don't you play, or have you never played, cricket or football?" I asked.

"No, I haven't."

"Really? But don't you play anything?"

"Oh yes, *I play the organ.*"

I did not take him.

An applicant whose name, appearance and accent—particularly the latter—were all suspicious, presented himself one day, saying he was of Swiss origin but of British nationality, with other details

of his pedigree, all of which may or may not have been camouflage. After listening patiently to his somewhat lengthy preamble, I said,

"Look here, would you mind saying, 'He ran down to the river to look at the ripples"? He seemed a good deal surprised at my request, but repeated the sentence as I had given it. The letter R 'did' him, and I felt obliged to say,

"Ah yes, exactly, and I am afraid you don't come into the Artists' *Rrr*ifles."

As I had no proof that he was a Hun, I gave him the benefit of the doubt, was as kind as circumstances permitted, and gilded the pill by saying that I had no doubt his intentions were all right, explaining, however, that if I took him he would be in for a terrible time—in any case being called "Fritz" at first, and probably even more offensive things afterwards. He gutturally thanked me for saving him from such terrors and took his departure.

Among the thousands who made application for enlistment in the Artists during the war, genuine painters were, as a rule, conspicuous by their absence. One of the few who did join was asked whether he had ever been hung in the Royal Academy, and he said that, so far, he had not. Some months afterwards, just after the opening of the Spring Exhibition, a number of men were loading up a lorry at the Depôt, when a rather hot-looking private came up to me and said,

"You will excuse my speaking to you, sir, but when I joined you asked me if I had ever been hung at the R.A. I thought you would like to know that I am there this time—on the line."

Suitable congratulations followed, after which he resumed his job of loading the lorry.

In the earlier days of the war we were rather prone to look askance at any applicant who was unable to show that he had been at a Public School, but later we took a wider and more liberal view of this, as also of other points. If we had not done so we should not only have missed many a good man who subsequently did extremely well, but at one time, if we had tried to stick closely to the qualifications obtaining in pre-war days and in the earlier part of the war, we should have been hard put to it to find enough recruits to maintain our strength.

As time went on, a great number of men arrived from countries overseas to join, and I interviewed men from all over the world. A number who had been through the campaign in South-West Africa, and others who had been fighting in East Africa, came to join us. One man hailed from a very remote South Sea Island, but had heard all about us and found his way to Duke's Road, although it took him four or five months to get there.

Our friendly rivals, the "Devil's Own," or to give them their proper title, the "Inns of Court," began at one time to pull my leg by sending

some specimens along, saying that they did not appear to be quite what they wanted, but thought that I might perhaps like to see them. I did not take any of them, but waited until a really impossible applicant appeared for the Artists and then sent him along with the strongest possible recommendation to the Inns of Court, saying that we had not quite room enough for him, but as I understood their recruiting was not going too well, I thought they might perhaps like to see a really good man. After this, cast-offs from our friendly rivals did not trouble us.

On one occasion, when there was a large crowd of candidates waiting to be interviewed, one of them got badly bored with waiting and said to the orderly on duty outside my room,

"Look here, I have come all the way from Muswell Hill to see if I can get into this beastly corps, and I'm fed up with this waiting."

"Ah," said the orderly, "I came from Japan to be interviewed."

Collapse of the man from Muswell Hill.

We had a great number of good men from the Argentine, in fact, so many were there at one time, that, as a joke, notices of smoking concerts, etc., were posted up in Spanish as well as in English. Men turned up from the West Indies, China, Japan, the Malay States, India, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, in fact, from all over the world, but I believe I am right in saying that the Argentine

did better in numbers than anywhere else overseas owing, no doubt, to the fact that our great overseas dominions were raising large armies of their own.

In the earlier days of the war, boys of fifteen or sixteen were very fond of coming along and representing their age as seventeen years six months (at which age we were then allowed to take them), and I have had wild wires from head masters of schools and also from parents, inquiring whether one, A.B., height 5 feet 9½ inches, fair hair, blue eyes, and a slight stammer, had joined the Artists. If so, would I at once wire, and this sometimes resulted in a visit to the Depôt of irate fathers and, what was much worse, angry mothers.

One youngster gave his age as seventeen years six months and was duly enlisted. Two days later a choleric father was shown in.

"I understand, sir, that you have enlisted my young son without my permission or authority."

Having looked up the roll of men recently taken, I informed the father that as the son had given his age as seventeen years six months, and appeared to be otherwise eligible, he had, of course, been taken.

"Seventeen-six! And do you know his real age, Captain Blomfield?"

I explained that I concluded the age he had given was correct.

"I see, but his real age is fifteen-nine, and *I've paid his fees for next term at school.*"

"Ah," I said, "that's bad."

"Yes, damn it, very bad," replied the father.

"Well, sir, I am afraid this is a very serious business; your son is liable for prosecution for fraudulent enlistment."

"Dear me, dear me, is that so? Look here, Captain Blomfield, will you take an ashplant and give him a damned good hiding? If you will, I shall be much obliged to you."

I explained that I couldn't very well do that.

"Well, look here, Captain Blomfield, he smokes. He oughtn't to smoke, ought he?"

Having smoked with determination at the same age myself, I, of course, heartily agreed that it must not be allowed.

"Ah, I am glad you agree, and do you think you could manage somehow to stop his smoking?"

"You leave that to me," I replied, confidently.

After that the choleric father cooled down a lot. As a matter of fact, he was really immensely pleased and proud of his boy, but the paying of fees for the following term had been a nasty facer. Other fathers will appreciate this point.

After the father had blown away I sent for Private, No.——, and he reported, looking as smart as paint, and a credit to any corps (he had been a corporal in his school O.T.C.).

"Now then . . . what age did you give when you joined?"

"Seventeen years six months, sir."

"Quite so; and what is your real age?"

"Fifteen years six months, sir."

"I see. Now look here, young man, there's going to be big trouble over this, but I'll give you a chance—you smoke, don't you?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Oh, it's 'Oh yes,' is it? Now listen to me—if you will undertake not to smoke until you go overseas, your punishment washes out, but if *not*, you are in for a very bad time. Now, which is it to be?"

"Oh, I don't think I could give up smoking, sir!"

"What!" I said. "A boy like you unable to give up smoking! Don't talk rot. Now, make up your mind, which is it to be?"

He then got very red and shuffled about on his feet, but suddenly drew himself up—he was a smart lad.

"All right, sir, I'll promise."

He kept his promise, at any rate for a considerable time, and did well in camp, eventually wangling his way out to the 1st Battalion, his real age only being discovered after he had been in the trenches for some weeks, when he was promptly sent home again.

A fine youngster came one day and admitted that he was only sixteen. On enquiry I found that he had joined the Sportsmen's Battalion at the age of fourteen, had been at the front for some time

and had been wounded. A good number of these boys managed to pass in by misrepresenting their ages, but latterly this was put a stop to by insisting on the production of the applicant's birth certificate.

One uncommonly bright little spark appeared one day.

"Do you wish to join this regiment?"

"Yus, I've 'eard it's a very good *corpse*."

"Yes," I said, "we are generally considered pretty good; and may I ask what your calling in life is?"

"Oh yes, I'm a tripe merchant—wiv me fawther, yer know. I'm a pretty 'andy chap—do most things —ride me own cob, yer know."

This nearly cornered me, but some one was fighting on my side—and the obvious answer was vouchsafed to me—a brain wave—and I persuasively said,

"Ride your own cob! But you would be positively wasted here. This is an infantry regiment; your proper place is the cavalry."

"Ow, orl right, I'm sure I don't care if yer don't want me," and jamming his hat on (at a cavalry angle), he retired, whistling offensively.

One grey-headed "Wasbird" became very persistent in his visits, and as he had a commanding presence and all the *savoir faire* of a Divisional Commander, he generally succeeded in reaching his objective—my room. I regretfully informed him on each occasion that, at his age, fifty-three,

I had not the power to consider his application. However, there is nothing like persistence, and to my surprise and, I must add, pleasure, he appeared again, in May, '15, a fully-fledged 2nd Lieutenant, R.F.A. How he managed it I don't know, but I suppose the War Office knows, or knew!

A father called one day and informed us that he had a son who was "the very thing for us; always been brought up proper, and always lived in a double-fronted 'ouse"; to which we felt inclined to reply that his son was evidently too big a swell for us altogether, and that as we were single-breasted he had better find a regiment in which there would be room for him to live.

One day, after the introduction of Lord Derby's scheme, I asked an applicant if he was a "Derby man," and he replied, "Naw, 'Uddersfield."

Among the large number of parents and others who turned up at Duke's Road for the purpose of advocating the enlistment of their offspring, there occasionally appeared fathers and others whom I already knew. One day a card was brought in bearing the name of Fairfax, and this sounded familiar. In 1910 I was away in my small boat, the crew consisting of another architect and my son, at that time a boy of ten, and we had run into a certain creek for the night. As this creek had only depth for quite small craft, and as there was practically nothing which could be called traffic, I did not think it mattered much



COL. H. J. SHIRLEY.

[To face page 112



MAJOR OSTLE.

[To face page 113.

where I let go my anchor, with the result that I brought up bang in the middle of the fairway. We were lying there, very pleased with ourselves, the weather, and everything, when we became aware of a small dinghy, with one occupant, coming down with the ebb. As soon as the occupant got within hailing distance he began to strafe us—wanting to know what the —— we meant by bringing up in the middle of the fairway, that there had already been a number of complaints about it, and "a lot of talk ashore," etc., etc., adding that we should hear more of it. I was so taken aback that I could not think of any suitable reply at first (one seldom *can* on such occasions), but at last I go out, "Are you the harbour master here?"

"Harbour master be damned! My name's Fairfax; every one knows me here."

Then I fired off,

"All right, Mr. *Fairway*, next time I am going to bring up in the middle of the *Fairfax*, I'll let you know."

He did not seem to appreciate my joke a little bit, and retired sideways down the creek, throwing out objurgations. I never expected to see him again.

Well, Mr. Fairfax was duly shown in by my orderly, and directly I saw him I knew it was "Mr. Fairway," and accordingly greeted him with,

"Ha, Mr. Fairway, we meet again."

As the last time he had seen me I was garbed, if I remember rightly, in a sweater and dungaree pants, and was now in khaki, he did not know me from Adam; but on my recalling the incident to his mind, he remembered all about it, and was more or less apologetic. Having broken the ice with our reminiscences, I asked him how I could reinstate myself in his good opinion, and what I could do for him now. In quite a short time (the common effort of the war being such a blotter-out of past differences) we were on a friendly footing, and by the time he left the Depôt a distinct *entente* had been established. It appeared that his son had been snaffled and pushed into a line battalion and that he was anxious I should rescue him and get him into the Artists. I did my best to get the boy, but it could not be managed. I look forward to meeting "Mr. Fairway" again, afloat or elsewhere, and hope if he reads this story that he will not mind my relating it.

At the beginning of the war, and for some months afterwards, we were a "Depôt." Then the War Office became entangled in its own nomenclature, and having invented "third line depôt unit," became fearful, apparently, of such a unit being confused with a Depôt; so, in May, 1915, on the crest of a brain wave, they evolved "Administrative Centre" as a substitute for Depôt. This new name sounded important and might, we

thought, lead to promotion; an O.C. an "Administrative Centre" must, from the very sound of it, we argued, be a bigger bug than an O.C. Depôt. But not a bit of it; indeed, as though in answer to our thoughts, an order shortly came out to the effect that no officer commanding a depôt was to be above the rank of captain, and it therefore followed that no officer of that rank who was appointed to an A.C. command could be promoted. The fact of a number of years' service in the old Volunteers or Territorials was not looked upon as any reason for promotion if you were doing a home job, however important and strenuous that job might be. No, the real way to get on was not to rejoin your old corps, but to be some one who had not taken the slightest interest in soldiering in any shape or form, and if by good luck you could also be one of those who had in the piping times of peace scoffed at the Volunteers and Territorials, your success was assured. You then stood an excellent chance of being given a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel right away, on the staff at home, with the accompanying emoluments and made D.A.D. of part-worn clothing, or any old thing—the work (so called) did not matter, the great point being that you were a Colonel. If, in addition, you were well to do in ordinary life, and had not to throw your profession to the winds in order to serve, the better your chance.

Now that I am grousing, there is another point

to which I may refer, and that is the absence of any recognition whatever (that is, at any rate, up to the time of writing) of the services of those who, on account of age or other good reason, had to confine their soldiering to service at home. If you managed to cross the channel and escaped the air raids in London, many " cushy " jobs were to be had at the back of the front—a long way back in many cases—for which at the end of the war you were entitled to put up two, or even three, ribbons. We are all thankful that the English Channel was, and is, where it is, but—what about it ? Mobilized service for four and a half years in the war of wars, and a victorious war at that, should surely be recognized by a medal of sorts, making that for home service distinctive if you like. And the Special Constables got a medal.

" I say, Dad, what did Grandad do in the Great War ? "

" Well, my boy, he did what he was told to do ? "

" And what was that ? "

" Well, he was too old to go out, you see, so they gave him a job at home, at which, by the way, I've heard he worked devilish hard."

" Poor old thing, didn't they give him any medal or anything ? "

" No, you see, silver ran short, and there was a big re-housing scheme on."

However, 'tis better to be good than beautiful —and that's that.

When the War Office started the Administrative Centre stunt, I became O.C.A.C., and for a long time was known as the "Okak," the Depôt being known as the "Okakery." In August, 1916, the War Office became tired of talking about "Administrative Centres"—it takes quite a long time to say it, and still longer to write or even type it—and we were ordered to revert to "Depôt," preceded by T.F., the latter, presumably, being inserted in order that the feelings and susceptibilities of Regular depôts might not be hurt. Anyhow, the change did not make much difference to us; but we felt that so much mentality indicated that the war was being got on with, and so we did not worry.

In August, 1915, all Administrative centres were placed under the command of the officer in charge of Territorial Force Records (afterwards O. i/c Infantry Records), who in our case and that of the other battalions of the London Regiment, was Colonel J. G. Adamson, and it was, as a rule, only at the awe-inspiring meetings convened by this C.O. (to our great satisfaction he was made a C.M.G. for his services) that one realized one's brother Okaks. It is true that I experienced some dreadful hours with them when ordered to attend as a member of a clothing board, the business on such occasions being the inspection of part-worn and provisionally condemned cloth-

ing; and of all the unpleasant jobs I ever took a hand in—in or out of the army—I think this was the worst.

Other dealings with the fraternity of depôt officers were generally on the telephone, e.g.,—

"Hullo! I say, I am out of A.F. B203—can you do any?"

"No, sorry—afraid not, but I have tons of A.F. X2508—I suppose they wouldn't do?"

"Ah, no use, I fear, thanks all the same."

"Pretty rotten weather, isn't it?"

"Yes, perfectly putrid." (Ring off.)

Official visits to the Depôt of highly-placed personages were not frequent, but when they *did* come we were generally fortunate in having everything in order for them in regard to the particular detail which they came to investigate or inspect, and when they became uncomfortably searching in their enquiries—in other words, when there was something which the Depôt ought to have known about, but didn't—it was generally possible to draw a herring across the trail and shorten the interview by judiciously and respectfully (oh! *how* respectfully) asking for information and guidance on some question concerning which we were perfectly certain the highly-placed personage knew nothing, but which, in his particular official position, he *ought* to have known, and which he *knew* he ought to have known.

One very genial and highly-placed Medical Officer

(I forget his official title) came several times at long intervals, and the following is the sort of thing which took place:—

Enter Orderly.

Orderly. "Colonel——is here, sir, and wishes to see you."

O.C. Depôt. "Ah—show him in at once."

Highly Placed Medical Officer. "Good morning; everything all right, I suppose?"

O.C. Depôt. "Perfectly, sir."

H.P.M.O. "No trouble of any kind?"

O.C. Depôt. "No, sir."

H.P.M.O. "Great many men here?"

O.C. Depôt. "No, sir, only my staff—one sergeant, one corporal and four men."

H.P.M.O. "I see, and are they all right?"

O.C. Depôt. "Quite all right, sir."

H.P.M.O. "Are you all right?"

O.C. Depôt. "Quite, sir, thank you."

H.P.M.O. "Now, I am sure you will like to ask me some questions about this A.C.I. referred to in District Orders yesterday, and which you have of course read?"

O.C. Depôt. "Yes, sir, I should be very glad to hear what you feel we ought to do about that A.C.I. (tries to look as though he had been studying District Orders all the morning), but there is one question on which we badly need guidance, viz., when a B2 man's medical history sheet has not been signed by——should we be right in——?"

H.P.M.O. "Ah, let me see—er—of course—that is—well, I think that is a question which ought to be referred to—the—ah—well——(Briskly) By the way, has Colonel Horsley been here lately? I wish you would remember me to him, will you? Now, as I have seventeen other depôts to visit, I must be off. *Good* morning."

Exit H.P.M.O.

The Medical Officer attached to the Depôt in the early part of the war was Captain A. P. Ricketts, C.M.G., an officer to whom the excellent physique and health of the men enlisted for the Corps at that time was largely due. He was very careful never to pass a man about whom there was the slightest doubt from the doctor's point of view, and, later on, when he took to himself a wife, the Depôt Staff made him a modest present whereon was inscribed, "He never passed a crock." At a later date the medical inspection of recruits was transferred to Whitehall, with immediate results on the hospital accommodation in camp.

In the earlier part of the war, when preliminary interviews were at the Depôt and not at the different offices in recruiting areas, the first question asked in connection with the filling up of papers, after a man had been approved, was,—"What is your religion?" and in this connection I had some curious replies, and realized the existence of religions that I had certainly never heard of before and which reminded one of the old "chest-

nut" of the Sergeant-Major forming up a Church Parade :—

"Open to column of superstitions from the Church of England,—Church of England, stand fast—fancy religions, about turn!"

One day a father with a son, and a dark-looking friend of about the father's age, appeared.

"Are you all presenting yourselves for enlistment in this regiment?" I asked.

"Ha! ha!' ejaculated the father. "No, no! I have brought my son to join, if you will have him, and this gentleman is a friend of mine."

"Very good," I said. "Now, fathers sit there, and distinguished visitors"—and here I bowed to the dark man—"sit there, please."

Then to the boy: "What is your age?" etc., etc.

"Well, sir, I think your boy will do for us all right."

Then I took the attestation paper and said to the youngster,

"What is your religion? Are you Church of England or Mohammedan, or what?"

I don't know why I said "Mohammedan," but at that moment I looked across the table and the dark man was rising up in his chair like a cobra.

"*I* am a Mohammedan," he said, upon which I nearly ejaculated "Kamerad," but pulled myself together and made a profound apology.

"Oh, I don't mind," said the dark man, taking

my ill-considered chaff very well. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, ah—er—yes, ha, ha, ha!" I replied weakly.

This is an instance of trying to be funny at the wrong time. It is also an instance of sub-conscious telepathy or something of the sort.

One day, on arriving at the Depôt, I found, standing in the entrance hall, a youth wearing Old Carthusian colours, whereupon I remarked,

"Ah, Charterhouse, I see—which house?"

"Why, *Charter*house," he replied.

"Yes, so I see," I said, "but I am asking you in which *house* you were in."

He then named a house I had never heard of.

"There was no such house in my time," I said, "and I have never heard of it."

"Well, it is some time since you left, sir, and it is quite likely you never have heard of it, but it is for fellows going in for modern languages."

To this I replied that I certainly never *had* heard of it, and should be glad if he would tell me where the house was.

"Oh, in the town."

"*What*," I said, "in Godalming?"

"Yes."

"I see. Well, what form were you in?"

"The seventh."

"The *what?*" I said.

By this time I thought I had better make enquiries, left the youth standing in the hall, saying I would see him again directly. Upon sending for

him I found he had bolted. He had no doubt been told that in order to get into the Artists it was necessary to have been at a Public School, but he had a piece of bad luck and hit a nasty snag by running into a recruiting officer who was himself an Old Carthusian. If he had chosen some other school he might have got the better of me, but I don't think he was a good egg.

There was another unsatisfactory egg, however, which I took, thinking it was absolutely new laid—a perfectly pukka egg in every respect. In due course it went to camp, where it was thought very highly of—in fact, it was really a show egg—apparently. Presently a very distinguished regiment asked for a few of our best men for commissions. The new-laid egg was picked out first and displayed at the top of the basket, as a shining example of what the Artists could really do in the way of providing candidates for commissions when they really put their minds to it. A week after this basket of selected samples was delivered to the aforesaid distinguished regiment, the police appeared and asked to see the egg, and subsequently poached him, and we then discovered that he was not fit even for electioneering purposes.

A war-time order which always troubled me a lot was that prohibiting officers from smoking pipes in the street or public places. Did this mean in *all* streets, and in *all* districts, or only where you were likely to be caught by an A.P.M.? You could

route march all up Piccadilly smoking a pipe—at least I did so—but if you were alone—Nemesis!

Then there was the order: "Officers in uniform will not walk arm in arm with persons of the other sex." This struck one as an interfering sort of order, a hit at love's young dream, but in the earlier days of the war there was a good deal of un-asked for hanging on by "persons of the other sex," and any one in khaki had to exercise great caution. Even at my age—but that is another story.

Anyhow, it was not at all clear whether the order applied to all. Did it apply, for instance, to elderly officers giving an arm to a tired wife?—or only to the "one-pip" boys out with their best girl? My small daughter, aged ten, would have none of it.

"Army order or not, Daddy, I'm going to take your arm *all* the way home"; and she did!

To revert to the question of smoking—a bad but attractive habit. I was going home one evening through one of the quiet Bloomsbury streets in the neighbourhood of our Depôt, with a pipe going full blast, when it was borne in on me that a highly-decorated Colonel was emerging from a house on the other side of the street, and that, as he emerged, he glared. I thought, "Well, the old thing seems interested in me, at any rate," and I began feeling about to make sure that I was not improperly dressed—never thinking of the

pipe. I proceeded along the street, but soon heard a car pulling up alongside me, and a stern voice saying,

"You have no business to be smoking a pipe in the street."

With soldierly aptitude and precision I executed a smart right turn, dashed the pipe out of my mouth, and saluted. A proper salute, too, not one of those war-time salutes which often looked as though the man saluting was scratching a bluebottle off his ear.

"No, sir," I said; "very sorry, sir," feeling very much as one did before a swishing at Charterhouse forty years ago (as a matter of fact, the second time I was swished at Charterhouse *was* for smoking). The Highly-Decorated Colonel then saw that instead of a young and giddy subaltern (as he had no doubt surmised from my youthful figure and agile tread) being the culprit, he had jumped on a harmless old dug-out, rather older than himself, melted, and in a laudable endeavour to ease the delicate situation, said, with a charming smile,

"Quite all right with a cigar or cigarette, you know, but—er—not—er—a pipe, don't you know!" (extension of the charming smile).

"Yes, sir," I said, still standing stiffly at attention.

My eminently correct deportment and demeanour was, I felt, creating a favourable impression, and

I realized that all danger was passed, when, with even added charm of manner, he said,

"Which direction are you going? Can I give you a lift anywhere?"

"Thank you, sir," I said, much gratified by this thawing and condescension. "I have been shut up in the Artists' Depôt all day, and want exercise badly." I then gave him an old-pattern—which is the best pattern—Artists' salute, and he rolled on. Of course, if I had, however politely and mildly, asked for a proper interpretation of the order relating to pipes and smoking, or had, indeed, said anything at all, he would have bitten my head off.

In the summer of 1915 I had a large number of men at the Depôt for whom there was not room in camp; in fact, I had over 1,400 such recruits at one time, and this state of affairs continued into 1916. Then the Powers that were woke up, and finding large columns of troops route-marching all over London, came to the conclusion that these men must be got into camp somehow. In the case of the Artists, by dint of extra billeting, this was at last managed, very much to the advantage of the men concerned and their training, although, previously, having got them at the Depôt, I seized my opportunity, and arranged to route march them myself once a week, which gave me a little fresh air, and was a welcome change from the stuffy old building in Duke's Road.

I have always thought that one particular march which we carried out was the jaunt that roused the War Office to action in the matter of getting the men away to camp. It was a fifteen-mile trek, and I had 1,300 men out, with two or three subalterns, a couple of sergeants, and a job lot of newly-created corporals, and the drums. The latter part of the march was up Piccadilly, and we held up the traffic in Piccadilly Circus for about a quarter of an hour; the men being all recruits, with very few N.C.O.s to look after them, there was a good deal of straggling. My youngsters were on a 'bus coming home from a *matinée*, and when I got home there were shouts of,

"We saw you, Daddy, and you should have heard the 'bus drivers swearing."

As I say, I think that particular stroll was the one which was spotted by the Higher Powers. Before this we pulled off a good many cheery tramps, sometimes ending up with a swim at the baths in the Caledonian Road. Taking these boys out made me feel years younger, although the fact that I did not look as young as I felt was brought home to me one day, when marching proudly at the head of some 500 recruits, by a remark from a bystander who was obviously floating in beer (this was before the days when beer was watered by the Food Controller). Having had a good look at me, he called out,

"Good luck to yer, old Fawther (hic!)!"

On another similar occasion an onlooker remarked,

"Ah, there's an old 'un."

One of the subalterns of the 2nd Battalion, R. Coleman, took on the training of recruits while they were waiting to go to camp, with marked success; in fact, of the many excellent instructors in the Corps, I do not suppose any one did more consistently good training work than this officer.

A really good brass band was raised for the 3rd (afterwards the 2nd) Battalion, and for a considerable time in 1915, they were at the Depôt and used to play opposite the building every morning during the changing of the Guard—after the manner of St. James' Palace—creating considerable interest in the neighbourhood, and adding much to the tone of the proceedings generally.

In 1917 a relation of mine was travelling to London, and having, in the train, got into conversation with a young officer, asked him how he got his commission, whether through Sandhurst, through an O.T.C., or how?

"Oh, I went through the Artists' Rifles," said the sub.

"Really," said my relation, "then you probably know my connection, Charles Blomfield?"

"What, the Old Man!—rather!—wonderful old fellow; marched us all off our legs—couldn't keep

up with him—quite wonderful, because if he is a day, he must be seventy."

At that time I was fifty-three.

Another reference to my age—about which, by the way, I seem to be writing a good deal—was more disturbing.. During a short war-time week-end visit to the Eastern Counties I had to finish my journey on the local 'bus. At first sight this vehicle, which was very "local," and ancient, appeared to be more than overflowing, but four very smart young women, beautifully dressed in patent leather boots and wrist-watches—they had other clothes as well, of course—called out,

"Here, we'll make room for *you!*"—which they did—and I soon found myself engaged in an animated conversation. Presently one of the young ladies said,

"I say, I do believe it's going to rain, and I've nothing to put on," whereupon I pointed out with customary Artists' Rifles' gallantry, that I had a trench coat which we might share—she in one sleeve and I in the other. This proposition was received with acclamation by the girl who was to share the coat, but the girl beyond her said,

"Oh! giddy old whelk!"

Another "Old Man," a contemporary of mine in the Corps, and one of the best, either young or old, known as "Uncle Percy" or "Pigeon," his surname being Rust (anything less rusty I never knew), went out as a Colour-Sergeant with the 1st

Battalion in 1914, and afterwards came home with others to take a commission and assist in training the (then) 3rd Battalion. One day, before the newly-raised battalion went to camp, he was at the head of his company, marching along the Euston Road, and having not yet got his officer's kit, was in plain clothes, when a small boy, hanging on to a rope at the back of a railway van, called out,—

" 'Ullo! got yer at last, 'ave they?"

Whether he thought that "Pigeon" was a recruit, or a deserter whom we had just caught, I don't know—but as a remark to a man of fifty-three who had, incidentally, served with the C.I.V.'s in the South African War and gone to the front in France in 1914 as a sergeant, at the age of fifty-two, and, moreover, done about as much good work in the Corps as any one we ever had, it was a bit rough!

On several occasions we were lucky enough to be lent the Artists' Rifles' drums of the 104th Provisional Battalion, under our old friend, Drum-Sergeant Enguell (who afterwards took a commission as equipment officer in the R.F.C.), and as his drums, fifes, and bugles were about as perfect as could be found anywhere, the Depôt route marches became quite a feature.

One day a draft for the 1st Battalion was leaving for Southampton and was to be marched to Waterloo Station from the Depôt, headed by the brass band, so I arranged to take the recruits from

Regent's Park to give the draft a send-off. We had the drums, and having arrived on the Approach from Waterloo Road to the station, I halted. The drums, however, did not notice (?) the command to halt and disappeared into the station. The draft came past us and we duly cheered. Shortly afterwards a Deputy Acting Station-master, or a Railway Official of, evidently, some importance, turned up and said to me,

"Won't you bring your men on to the platform?"

"Of course, with great pleasure," I said, and to my surprise and satisfaction, my little crowd of some 350 recruits were passed straight on to the platform from which the draft was departing, and on which I found the drums duly posted in the best place.

The explanation of this stealthy and successful manœuvre was that the gallant Drum-Sergeant in ordinary life was a well-known and respected member of the L. & S.W. Railway Staff. He saw his opportunity, seized it, marching his drums straight in and arranging that my little column must, of course, be there also. And this is how things are sometimes worked in the army, and is a good example of minor tactics. After the draft had gone I marched the recruits back to the Depôt, headed by both bands.

One day a very fine and well-nourished provincial Mayor presented himself for enlistment.

" I have thought it my duty, sir, as an example to my Borough, to offer my services to my country," and I took him.

The next day No. —— Private the Mayor reported and asked for leave to attend the Kitchener Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

" Oh yes," I said, " and do you go as a Mayor or as a private in the Artists' Rifles ? " I knew, of course, that he must have had his invitation as a Mayor.

" Oh " (proudly), "as a private in the Artists' Rifles, sir."

Shortly afterwards he came out on one of my marches, and after about a mile and a half, a sergeant reported,—

" Stout man who joined last week, sir, Mayor of somewhere, I think, going very short."

" All right, I know the man ; let him fall out and report sick." The next day the M.O. said,

" I say, have you got any more of those beastly marches of yours coming off again yet ? "

I replied that I hoped so, adding that I should like to know why he called them beastly.

" Well," said the M.O., " they may not be beastly from your point of view, but I wish you would not have them. I have never had to look at so many feet as I had to this morning since the war began, and I don't like it. There was one stout pot-bellied fellow with the largest blister I ever saw in my life, and when I pricked it—ah ! "

This, of course, was the Mayor, throwing off the effect of the Municipal Banquets. He was too eminent a person to stay long with us, and I was not surprised to see him appear one day rigged with green bands and tabs and other insignia of a recruiting officer, which seemed a satisfactory outcome of his patriotic efforts and more appropriate as an employment than growing prize blisters on his feet.

The most important work at the Depôt after selecting the men was the clothing of them. This was a very strenuous job, and bearing in mind the dismal dungeon in the basement where this work had to be carried on, and the wretched accommodation therein afforded, the result reflects the greatest credit on the N.C.O.s who were responsible.

We generally managed to fit the men somehow, although on one occasion we had two recruits, one being six feet nine and a half inches high and the other five feet two inches (the latter taken by special request of the War Office), and there was no stock size clothing large enough for the big man and nothing small enough for the short man. Eventually, special clothing having been built for them, they went to camp together, causing considerable sensation.

We also, at different times, had two other men of six feet seven inches in height and had to indent for special clothing for both of them.

At one time we were in need of another man

to help with the clothing and some one made the brilliant suggestion that we should apply to Camp for Private —— a member of a celebrated firm of second-hand clothiers. This sounded excellent, so we made our application, backed by strong representations that if Camp could not help us, it would be impossible to get recruits down to them before the next war. In time, after the application had crawled through the "Proper Channels," the second-hand clothier private reported at the Depôt for clothing duty, and I congratulated myself on having done a really sound thing for once. After some days had elapsed I said to my senior sergeant,

"What a capital thing it is that we thought of getting that second-hand clothier man here!"

The sergeant received this remark with a sad and grave demeanour and an ominous shake of the head,—

"Well, I don't know, sir," he said; "the fact is he is *pushing all the misfits*."

Which, of course, is exactly what a second-hand clothier spends his life in doing, and the habit had become engrained. As our object was to turn out the men as smartly as possible, I concluded that this sort of "'busman's holiday" would not do, and, accordingly, returned the second-hand clothier to camp, with thanks for the loan. Eventually, he was drafted out to the 1st Battalion, and, sad to say, fell in the attack on Passchendaele on October 31st, 1917.

One day my orderly came in and reported that a lady from Paris wished to see me. This sounded promising, or, at any rate, out of the ordinary routine, so with visions of something unusually attractive and "chic" I gave orders that the lady from Paris was to be shown in, and rose to my feet, prepared to receive the vision of beauty with a gallant air, when in came a little old dear about four feet two and a half inches high, and of about the same beam.

"Ah, Monsieur le Capitaine—parlez-vous Français?"

"No, madame, no; very poor hand at your charming language."

"Ah, Capitaine, surely you are partly French yourself, n'est-ce pas?"

To which I replied that my family hailed from Suffolk, and although I had a cousin who had traced us back to a de Blondeville, I was afraid I could hardly claim to belong to her altogether delightful country.

"Ah, Capitaine, you ought to be French."

To which I replied that of course I felt I ought really, was sorry I wasn't, and, anyhow, what could I do for her.

"Ah," she said, "all ze colonels and captains come to me, and I make them *shine*."

At this I began to feel rather nervous as to what she meant to do to make me shine. Suddenly, with an "Ah, I will show you," she brought a little

tin case and a duster out of a bag she had with her, and rushed at a wooden chair, the back of which she smeared with some concoction and polished. I then found she was travelling in a patent polish for boots and belts, etc., and had to submit to having a special shine put on the toes of my boots. After this I called the orderly and said,

"Take this lady into the Orderly Room and let her show her wares to Sergeant Smith and others," and with many bows and smiles she sailed out.

Subsequently I heard that they had bought 12*s.* 6*d.* worth of her polish, and that it had ruined everything that it touched; but this, I think, must have been because they did not know how to put it on, for the lady from Paris certainly made me shine.

. . . . . .

As time passed on men began to turn up at the Depôt who had previously passed through our ranks, obtained commissions, and been out in the thick of it.

"Do you remember me, sir? You took me in January,'15."

"Oh, yes; awfully glad to see you again; come in and let us hear all about it"; and then, of course, there were all sorts of interesting things to hear; never about what they had done themselves, unless you dragged it out of them.

These lads who came limping in and bandaged up did a lot to cheer us up at the Depôt, always jolly, always sure that everything was going well,

and that we had "got the Huns all right"; one felt very proud of their having been through our ranks, and more than pleased at their turning up to visit the place where their soldiering had started.

One youngster, who did not look at all too strong, was in the Clothing Department of the Depôt for some considerable time in the earlier part of the war, and one day his very Spartan mother turned up and wanted to know how it was that her son was kept at the Depôt and was not out fighting like the other young men of his age, and why didn't I send him, and what did it mean? I replied that I did not at all want to lose him, as he was a useful man and was doing his work extremely well; but I said I thought he might get his chance presently.

"But he ought to be out *now*, Captain Blomfield!"

By and by this young N.C.O. went off to camp and I forgot all about him. A year later his name was brought in as wishing to see me, and not knowing it was the same man, I said, "Oh, yes, bring him in"; and a fit and hearty-looking young officer rolled in, with the mud of the trenches still on him.

"By gad," I said, "do you mean to say you are——?"

"The same, sir."

"Well, and what have you got there?"

"Oh, a Bosche helmet, and a few odds and ends

—and I've got a map here and would like to show you what we have been doing."

I then found he was in command of a company of the Gloucesters, and he detailed his part in the advance.

"And that is the spot where we dug in just before I left them yesterday," pointing to a spot on the map not far from St. Quentin.

"Have you seen your mother since you got back ?" I asked.

"No, I thought I would come and look you up first, sir."

Artists' Rifles first, mothers afterwards!

Another youngster who joined us when his real age must have been, I think, under seventeen, was attached to me at the Depôt for some time, and made an uncommonly smart orderly, but at last had to go back to camp. Some months afterwards he passed into a cadet unit of the R.F.C. and came to the Depôt to see us and report progress. The next time he appeared was in October, 1917, when he rolled in with two machine-gun bullet wounds and a broken ankle, having accounted in the air for four Huns. When Voss, one of Germany's most famous airmen, was brought down behind our lines, this youngster was told off to take the news of his death to a Hun aerodrome, and this he succeeded in doing, but on the way back was attacked by four machines, two of which he sent to the earth in flames, received his wounds, and broke his ankle in

landing. In October, 1918, he turned up again as a Captain, with a special job as instructor in flying.

. . . . .

As time passed on we were much struck with the ingenuity displayed by the Higher Authorities in the matter of inventing new kinds of returns, which generally had to be made in quadruplicate, e.g. :—

"Officers commanding units will render a return by August 1st of all Caulkers, Dock Checkers, Donkeymen and Stevedores," and another asked for a return of all "Slaughtermen and Offalmen." The return in both these cases, from the Artists, was "nil." Another return asked for was of "Potatoes and other produce grown at the Depôt." Now the Artists' Depôt was in Duke's Road, Euston Road, as everyone who has been in the regiment knows, and it would be difficult to find any kind of ground in which to cultivate potatoes or other produce, unless it was in the dirt which came off the boots of men in the drill hall after a march.

Some of the Army Forms for sending in returns of all ranks at the Depôt, with their past and present medical categories, etc. and other matters, became so involved and intricate that it became necessary to convene special meetings of depôt officers in order that the meaning thereof might be elucidated. At last, in October, 1918, orders were received to dispense with "Nil" returns.

A very large amount of applications by post for enlistment and enquiries generally had to be dealt

with from the first, and although a great part of these could be negotiated by the use of stereotyped replies and printed forms, many letters had to be answered in detail, and this involved heavy clerical work by the permanent staff and N.C.O.s and men attached for duty at the Depôt. Fortunately, there were always plenty of able stenographers and typists available from our ranks and much excellent work was done by them.

Official letters and communications became more and more terse; the " Sir " and " I have the honour to be " becoming less and less apparent, except in the case of addressing persons of exalted rank. In fact, in time some of the communications almost reached the point of rudeness in their brevity, with the result that we reverted to the old army fashion of gilding the pill by putting " please " at the end of everything, e.g.: " Reference yours of the 20th, I know nothing about this man, please." But the most satisfactory communication was when you received a pile of about thirty " memos " and letters, and could deal efficiently with the whole subject by attaching a slip on which was typed, " Passed to you for necessary action, please." This required no great mentality, and you felt that the loathsome packet had gone for ever. But as a matter of fact, they sometimes came back again, " please " !

For some time we sent out our missives on beautiful paper with " From the Officer Commanding T.F.

Depôt," with the regimental badge in the corner and other adornments, but after a time orders arrived to the effect that every care was to be exercised in the economical use of paper, and finally the slips of paper we were driven to were on a par with the truncated nature of the matter they contained, and at times any old piece of paper was good enough.

In the earlier part of the war we had practically a free hand in the matter of recruiting, and, within limits, could take any physically fit man whom we considered good enough in other respects for the regiment, but as time went on the War Office took an ever increasing and, from our point of view, paralysing hand in the game.

The first serious check placed on our expansiveness was when we were forbidden to advertise in any way, either in the papers or otherwise; not that we had employed advertising in the ordinary sense, having confined ourselves to circularising and an occasional paragraph in the papers. Finally, we arrived at the point where we were not allowed to take anyone under the age of eighteen years three months, and this order played havoc with our recruiting, owing to the fact that boys were being called up at eighteen and put into what was called the "Training Reserve." The formation of the latter was, in the interest of the youth of the country, no doubt, an excellent plan, but one could not help feeling that boys from good schools who

had been in their school cricket elevens and football teams, and prefects or monitors in their houses, should have been carefully put on ice and preserved for training as future officers. This was met to a certain extent by a provision that a boy of eighteen, if in his school O.T.C., could obtain exemption until he attained the age of eighteen and a half, provided he had served at least a year therein, had attained a high standard of efficiency, was recommended by his C.O., and approved by the War Office; in which case he was sent direct from his school O.T.C. to an Officer Cadet Battalion. All other boys were automatically called up for enlistment in the Training Reserve on reaching the age of eighteen.

We were given to understand that the age limit was fixed by the War Office after very careful consideration, as it meant that a cadet, having served the necessary period in an Officers' Cadet Battalion, was nearly nineteen years of age by the time he was qualified to accept a commission, the idea being that this would prevent unnecessary delay in sending him overseas. It was also pointed out that if the age limit for the Artists and the Inns of Court was lowered, it would inevitably lead to the admission of many boys of eighteen, with the result that the number of candidates passed through our ranks would be less.

Considering that we were unable to enlist any one under the age of eighteen years three months,

and all boys (with the exception of those in school O.T.C.'s) were called up for the Training Reserve at eighteen, this specious argument convinced neither us nor the Inns of Court. It left us with literally no field for recruiting but amongst the men whose exemption from military service had been withdrawn—mostly older men and unsuitable for training for commissioned rank.

However, everything comes to him who waits, and having reached the point when the Depôt was obliged to report to the 2nd Battalion that by the end of the year (1917) there would be no recruits to send down to them, the War Office suddenly and inexplicably changed front and, on December 4th, 1917, orders were given to the Inns of Court and Artists that they were in future to take boys of the same age as the Training Reserve. This changed the situation entirely, as it meant that if we wanted a boy of eighteen we could get him before he was snaffled for ordinary enlistment in the Training Reserve, and we, accordingly, soon became busy again.

Needless to say, this astonishing change of policy on the part of the authorities gave rise to many rumours. It will hurt no one—and it is a mere statement of fact—to say that the relationship between the Artists and the Inns of Court on the one hand and the War Office on the other, was not rendered more pleasant by the fact that those two O.T.C.'s were units of the Terri-

torial Force. Whenever our large armies were sorely in need of officers we were made much of, but when the crisis was passed we invariably had the feeling impressed upon us of being something unwanted. The attitude of the higher authorities to the Artists and the Inns of Court was very much like that of the public to the soldier in Kipling's poem :

> "O! it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, go away';
> But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins' when the band begins to play."

On several occasions new regulations for our recruiting were made the object of which was altogether incomprehensible, and the result of the one above referred to—had it remained in force—could only have been the complete extinction of the two O.T.C.'s.

No reason was given for the W.O.'s sudden change of mind and, as I have said, rumour was rife. Of the many explanations that were offered, I am most inclined to credit that suggested by Lieut. L. P. Moore, who expressed to me his opinion that compulsion and not conviction actuated the authorities, and that perhaps the reason is to be found in the political rather than the military history of the time.

Be the reason what it may, the Artists and "Inns of Court were saved from extinction and shortly after this we heard rumours of a new arrangement in connection with the recruiting, to



PTE. BRANDON THOMAS.

[*To face page* 144.

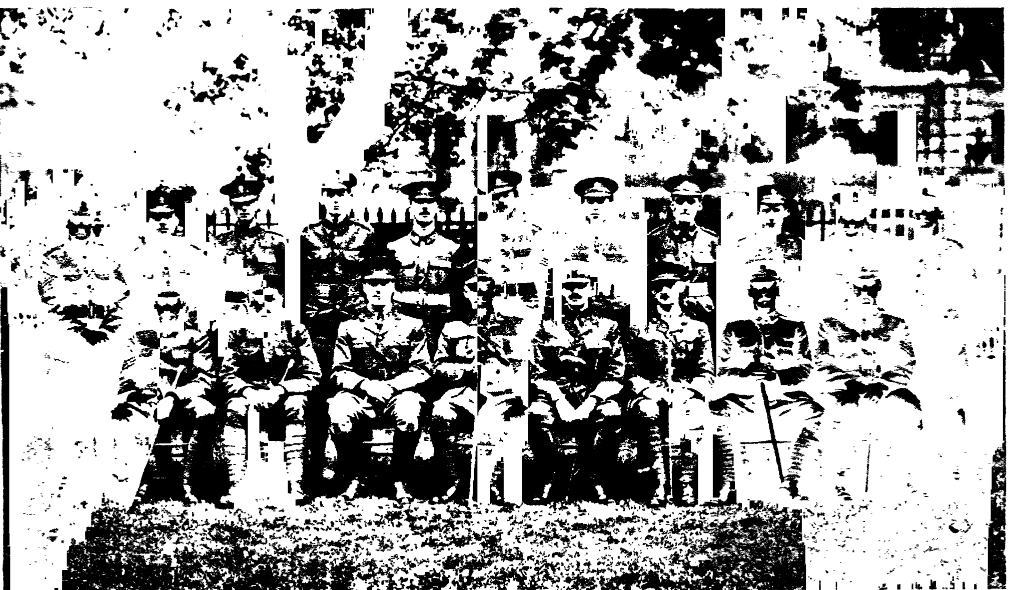


Photo PANORAS.

28TH BATT. LONDON REGIMENT (ARTISTS' RIFLES) ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE, 1916.

[*To face page* 145.

wit, that it would in future be carried on by a combined Board of the Artists and Inns of Court, with representatives from each regiment sitting thereon. In due course this materialised, and on February 2nd, 1918, Lieutenant Moore and five N.C.O.s. left the Artists' Depôt and reported for duty at the offices of the new "O.T.C. Selection Board," Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn.

After carrying on the recruiting for three years and three months, and having personally interviewed over 47,000 applicants, I felt relieved at the change, although at first I did not care about the new scheme, as it seemed to me that the healthy and friendly rivalry, and competitive *esprit de corps* which had existed between the two regiments had worked very well in practice, and I could not see that such a fusion and pooling of recruiting efforts could result in any material advantage. On thinking the matter over, however, and looking at the matter from a broader point of view, in the light of what might be best for the country generally with a view to the future provision of officers, I came to the conclusion that this co-ordination of effort might have a sounder basis than was at first apparent.

Sir Alfred Goodson, who had hitherto been acting as civilian representative on the Inns of Court Recruiting Board, was appointed President of O.T.C. Recruiting, and he gave the new arrangement a most satisfactory and pleasant send off by

inviting the recruiting staffs of the two regiments to d nner at the Reform Club, when everybody said nice things about everybody else and we came away with the feeling that the one thing required for the ending of the war had been accomplished.

At this convivial meeting I found myself seated between two distinguished K.C.S.'s, which situation, knowing that I had presently to get on my legs and speak, rather "put me off my stroke." But I managed to throw off a few ideas, among other things saying that I understood the selection of candidates for the Inns of Court had for a considerable time been carried out by a Board, while my work had been in the nature of a single-handed job, i.e., the approval or rejection of an applicant had been conducted either by myself or by an officer attached to the Depôt for recruiting purposes, and that I did not *know* but imagined that the snuffing out of one undesirable was easier when there was a Board of stout-hearted persons dealing with one trembling applicant than when it was a case of a single-handed interview only. In other words, when the applicant found one elderly dug-out officer he would be more liable to develop a dangerous offensive than when he finds himself in a salient surrounded by many, possibly adverse, critics.

Up to this time, one, and sometimes two, officers were attached to the Depôt and rendered most valuable help in the recruiting. In fact, in the earlier days of the war it would have been quite

impossible to carry on the work of interviewing applicants without such help. They all put their backs into the job like "Artists" and I can't say more. After the inauguration of the O.T.C. Selection Board, no more officers were attached to the Depôt, and I much missed their cheery presence and support.

. . . . .

On January 7th, 1918, the National War Museum Exhibition at Burlington House was opened by Lord French, who in his speech said,

"Before concluding I cannot help expressing the very great pleasure it has given me to be received here by a Guard of Honour of the Artists' Rifles. This grand Corps has done glorious service throughout the war and was one of the first Territorial Regiments to arrive in France. They rendered me help of a special kind in regard to the provision of officers which I shall never forget."

Having been on a peace-time guard at the R.A. on the occasion of the annual banquet, I thought I should like to see what a war-time guard of the Regiment was like, and so went round to Burlington House, and there saw the guard under the command of Captain P. Rust, with the brass band and drums. The turn-out was in every way worthy of the war-time Artists.

In the old days the O.C. the Guard always dined at the R.A. annual banquet and the senior sub. marched the Guard back to Headquarters. On one

occasion, in the 'nineties, I was performing the latter duty and we were just nearing H.Q. and the Band was wheeling to pass through the passage to Duke's Road, when a mail-van drove right into the middle of the big drum, dispersing the players and the instruments in various directions. No one was hurt, and we held up the mail-van and said things to the driver. This was before the giddy days of the motor-van.

. . . . . .

The work of recruiting having been transferred to the new Board, things became very quiet at the Depôt, but for a long time parents and others kept turning up to see about their boys joining, e.g.:

"You will remember, Captain Blomfield, that you took my eldest boy in January, 1915, and the second in 1916, and now I want you to take the third"; or, "You will remember you told me last October that if I brought my boy when he was eighteen you would be pleased to have him—can you do anything to help," etc. But as time went on these enquiries became fewer and everyone realised that a visit to the Depôt was no longer the way to get into the Regiment. We still had to clothe the recruits and despatch them to camp, and this generally meant inspecting and sending off two or three small drafts a week. In July, 1918, men were passed very rapidly from the Battalion, and this brought us a good deal under strength, with the result that much larger drafts made their

appearance at the Depôt. On July 10th we despatched a draft of forty-eight men to camp, after great struggles with the clothing, the stock of which was short.

In 1918, when the age of enlistment was extended to fifty, special platoons were formed in the Inns of Court and Artists for the reception of these old fathers, and various types of "Wasbirds" began to appear among the drafts at the Depôt. One day thirty-five of these men reported for clothing and despatch to camp. This particular draft included eleven parsons—one of them looking as though he ought to be sitting in a Deanery. In making my usual address to the draft before they left for camp, I referred to the distinguished character of the recruits composing it, adding, however, that I could not help feeling that it would be a great trial for those of the Clergy who were joining, and who, having been accustomed for so long to strafe their congregations from the pulpit, had now to stand in the ranks and be strafed themselves—which remark seemed to please them greatly. Shortly after the arrival of this ecclesiastical draft, a lorry with a large consignment of clothing appeared and the new draft was ordered to lend a hand at once to get the stuff in—and I shall never forget the impressive sight of the eleven clergymen, still in their clerical garb, rolling in huge bales of clothing—but they did it very cheerily and without any particularly bad language as far as I could hear.

Great credit is due to the staff at camp whose business it was to get these "Wasbirds" fitted to commissions. In the summer of 1918 two were recommended for the Army Ordnance Department, and on reporting for duty were asked by the C.O. where they had come from?

"From the Artists' Rifles, sir."

"What? Irish Rifles?"

"No, sir, Artists' Rifles."

"Oh, I see—very well, I shall put you in charge of the *paint stores*"; and he did!

As a rule, the recruits were clothed, inspected and sent to camp within forty-eight hours, and I generally took the opportunity of saying a few words to each draft before they went off, very much as follows:

"I generally say a few words to a draft departing for camp, and when you get down there don't do what I saw one of you do when I came on parade just now, and that is look round to see what the officer who is going to inspect you is like, because if you do this when you arrive in camp and the C.O. happens to be about and sees a newly-arrived draft of recruits staring round to see what he is like, or what the camp is like, he will think he has had a rotten lot of men sent down to him, whereas you are probably a very good lot. In other words, when you are at attention remain so, and stand perfectly steady. Those of you who have been in your school O.T.C.s will understand what I mean (stiffening

apparent among men with previous service); others who are soldiering for the first time have to learn this at once.

"Now, remember, you are in the Artists' Rifles, and, as I generally put it, are very lucky to get there (depression in the ranks). *We* may be lucky to get *you*, but that you have got to prove (recovery from depression). The Artists' Rifles were not raised during the war, but in 1859, which means we have got some years of history and tradition behind us of which we, especially old members like myself, are very proud. I joined the Regiment in April, 1882 (interested start of surprise), so I have some right to talk about it, and don't forget that if it had not been for the work which we old men put in years ago, when we got called 'Saturday night soldiers' and other pleasant things for our pains, there would not have been any Artists' Rifles for you fellows to come through in these days. So remember that we have a history of which we are proud, and that we look to you men who are joining us at the present time to carry on the traditions of the regiment and if possible to improve on them (resolution and determination apparent in the faces of the draft).

"We are, of course, very proud of the part which the Artists have taken in the war in providing officers for all branches of the Army. The sort of thing we like to hear, and the sort of thing we often *do* hear is, 'Oh, yes; I knew so and so would be all right, because he came from the Artists.'

"I hope presently you will succeed in obtaining your commissions ('well, of course, that is why we came to this beastly corps'), and remember, when you do, that the regiments you go to will probably have histories and traditions which they are just as proud of as we are, and which you will have to live up to; but what we old Artists like to feel about you is that you will carry the Artists' Rifles' training and traditions with you all the time, also that you will remember your service with us and feel that you have been taught your job as thoroughly as possible in the time available. It must be remembered that instruction which might be spread over a year or eighteen months in peace time is now crowded into a 'potted' or condensed course of some six or eight months. You will find the work strenuous, some of you, no doubt, but you have got to stick it. You will be bored stiff at times and wish you had given the Artists a wide berth, and you will grouse like the devil at times, but that does not matter (appreciative grins). It has been said that it is the British soldier's privilege to grouse, and it does not mean because he grouses he is any the worse soldier for it, that he does his work any the worse, and still less that when he comes to the point he will *fight* any the worse (more looks of determination).

"I hope you will get your commissions presently, and don't forget that when you reach your platoon or whatever it is you are going to command, that your first job is to get to know your men, look after

them, study their interests and show you are one of them, taking a share in their pleasures and interests as well as their work. If you do this you will find that when the time comes they will follow you to hell (shock) or any other unpleasant place to which you may have to go. Now, as you will have to listen to a great deal of lecturing and talk in camp, I will not inflict more on you (looks of 'Not at all, don't mind us'), but will conclude by wishing you all the best of luck in every way; and don't forget when you come back all right, as I hope you will, covered with ribbons, gold stripes and chevrons (more smiles), to look in here and tell us all about everything. 'Once an Artist always an Artist,' don't forget that, and that we look forward to welcoming any man who has been through our ranks."

As I generally had to fire off this gas three times a week to successive drafts, I got rather tired of it, but as a sort of "send-off" to camp it seemed to go all right. The only occasion on which any real relief was afforded to the monotony of this speech was during one of the daylight air raids in 1916. I had just got under way with my talk when my senior sergeant came into the hall and reported,

"Air raid immediately overhead, sir!"

I at once moved the recruits (about seventy) into the armoury and other refuges in the basement; these being followed by a number of people from the street, all seeking cover. A bomb fell just round the corner in the Euston Road. After a suitable

interval we returned to the hall and I finished the sermon.

When one thinks how those at the front were pounded day and night with every conceivable bomb and shell, one hardly likes to refer to the comparatively minor discomfort caused by the air raids on London, but, as far as they went, they were distinctly unpleasant, as many thousands can testify, especially those who occupied the top floor of a boarding-house with their families: I do not mind saying that I did not like them at all, although it was instructive, not to say entertaining, to observe the nature of the air raid garb affected by some of the inmates of the particular establishment in which we were trying to be cheerful. It was disturbing to meet an elderly lady whom we saw ordinarily at meal times, or elsewhere within the precincts of the establishment, correctly dressed and eminently cultured, suddenly taking cover on the kitchen stairs or in some dark corner with probably most of the hair she usually carried on her head left in her bedroom, and, generally, looking like nothing on earth.

"Is it all over, Captain Blomfield ?" she asked me once as the barrage gradually died down.

"Oh yes, I think so—I hope so."

The elderly lady went back to her room and her hair. Suddenly, "boom," "bang," "boom," and the thing started all over again. Out came the cultured elderly one again, with less hair than ever,

to take fresh cover. I, personally, never thought it mattered very much where we were, as knowing the nature of the building I felt sure that a direct hit would have wiped the whole place out.

One motto I coined during the war was: " It is an ill Zeppelin that bombs nobody any good." When Robinson performed his great feat of bringing down the Zep at Cuffley, two other Zeps were following, and when Robinson's catch came down in flames, they saw a certain village below them and at once started getting rid of their bombs. They dropped one nicely through the Church, turning it more or less inside out. The next morning the place bristled with architects in search of a job. I wasn't one of them, but the next day I was sent for, and on arrival was received by the local builder who conducted me up the tower, pointed out where all the bombs had fallen—" and there is Colonel ——'s house, sir, you can see it through the trees there, very badly knocked about."

" Ah, I said—has he got an architect ? "

" No, sir, I don't think so."

When we came down from the tower the Vicar was waiting and I said to him,

" I hear Colonel ——'s house has been badly hit, and that he hasn't got an architect."

" No, oh look here, Captain Blomfield, I'll tell him you're here."

In another two minutes I was saluting the Colonel at his house.

"Very pleased you will act for me," he said: "know your name of course."

"Thank you, sir, I shall be very pleased to do my best for you," etc.

"Ah—er—you're in khaki—what are you doing?"

"Commanding the Depôt of the Artists' Rifles, and carrying on all our recruiting, sir."

"Oh, *are* you; *now* I've got you!"

I thought, "Well, now I'm caught on something."

"Yes, confound you, you're the man who has been sending me *black men* for officers."

I then found that the gallant Colonel had been commanding a battalion of the "Fighting Fifth," and that we had succeeded in planting on him a coloured man from the Artists whom we had previously had the greatest difficulty in placing.

"Yes, and the hotter the weather became, the blacker he got," said the Colonel.

However, this did not prevent me from annexing the job, as well as the Church, which is why I say that it is (or was) "an ill Zeppelin that bombs nobody any good."

As a matter of fact, the said gallant Colonel had only recently acquired this house. He had been out in the thick of it near Armentières, etc., and, having done his bit for his age, thought he might take it more *quietly* at home, and arrived at his new residence on the very day of the raid. He and two other men with him had retired for the night, when

the bombs began to fall. He mobilized his party on the top landing, and at that moment a bomb fell and blew away a third of the house without doing them the least harm, and they proceeded to the cellar. As a nice change from the front, he did not appreciate the raid at all.

. . . . .

Early in 1918, the C.O. of the local unit of W.A.A.C.s enquired whether they might use our hall for a short time two or three nights a week for drill. As we already had a Volunteer Battalion and our own company of Junior Cadets using the hall, it was not very easy to fit in the W.A.A.C.s (or rather, Q.M.W.A.A.C.s, as they became shortly afterwards). However, it was arranged, and it soon added a "certain liveliness" to the Depôt, which liveliness was increased when some weeks later I was approached by the O.C. this unit of the W.A.A.C.s and asked whether I would drill them. I was terrified by the request but, overcome by the charm of the Administrator and Deputy Administrator, said I would do what I could, with the result that at 6.45 p.m. I found myself in command of sixty file of W.A.A.C.s, and started off by strafing them heavily for unsteadiness and talking. By the time I had got to "Will you stand steady and look to your front," "What is that girl looking at me for?" I began to gain confidence. Finally, I doubled them round the hall in fours, which they did uncommonly well, although a good deal of

putting in place of stray locks of hair, and other minor adjustments, etc., had to be gone through when they were standing easy. It was a strange outcome of the war to find one's-self drilling 120 girls—very nice girls, too. However, I managed to effect a judicious combination of discipline and fatherly care which seemed to work all right. Having reported this particular form of liveliness at home, my wife insisted on attending the next W.A.A.C. parade to "see what happened," and was much struck at the "fatherly" part of the business.

As a matter of fact, I looked so fatherly that the W.A.A.C.s invited me to their sports in Battersea Park, where I found myself officiating as starter. There were some extraordinarily good performers among these girls—only they would have done much better if they had been in shorts, or, at any rate, "gym" dress instead of skirts.

. . . . .

In 1917 a Comforts Fund was raised for the benefit of the 1st Battalion in the Field. The 2nd Battalion started the ball with a notable collection of £317 9*s.* and then asked us to carry on with the work of disbursement at the Depôt, which we did, and also added £588 15*s.* 6*d.* to the aforementioned amount. We were able to furnish the 1st Battalion with various articles which were much appreciated. Many old friends of the Corps kindly contributed to this fund. Later, in conjunction

with the Central Prisoners of War Committee, we were able to contribute help from the fund for men of the 1st Battalion who had been taken prisoners. The Committee consisted of Captain West, Lieutenant L. P. Moore and myself. Moore carried on the duties (which became very heavy when the care of prisoners was added) of Hon. Secretary and put in a lot of hard and successful work. After a time, when the number of prisoners of war increased, it was decided to stop sending comforts to the 1st Battalion and devote the fund solely to providing food, etc., for prisoners.

Among the various activities that were much to the fore in connection with the Artists during the war, two undertakings which redound greatly to the credit of those who started and carried them on must be recorded, viz., the Artists' Rifles' V.A.D. and the Artists' Rifles' Regimental Association.

The V.A.D. was started in January, 1911, by Colonel Horsley, who invited some ladies connected with the Regiment to consider the possibility of raising a detachment. This preliminary meeting quickly bore fruit, the detachment shortly becoming an accomplished fact. The original members were all relatives and friends of officers and men of the Artists. Steady and rapidly improving work was carried on up to the outbreak of the war, when all members, who had just scattered for their holidays, were recalled, and the work of collecting garments and hospital necessaries was at once

started. Drill, physical training classes, lectures and hospital courses were held during the autumn of 1914 and through the winter of 1914–1915 in order that members might make themselves efficient and be ready for anything that might be required of them. In December, 1914, a home was offered as an Auxiliary Hospital for the Detachment, but the W.O. declined the offer, accepting it, on a further offer, in March, 1915, with instructions to prepare it as quickly as possible for occupation. The first patients were received on April 28th, 1915, and the total number passed through were 942. The Chairman of the Hospital was Major Arthur J. Davidson, a popular retired officer of the Regiment, and the Commandant was Mrs. A. S. Goodall.

The Artists' Rifles' Regimental Association was established in 1916, being launched with an important inaugural ceremony in camp at Gidea Park. The Hon. Colonel presided and made a great and telling speech, saying among other things:

"You have heard my age is seventy-eight. All I can say, gentlemen, is that whether I am seventy-eight, eighty-eight, ninety-eight, or one hundred and eight, I will come from the ends of the earth to be where the Artists are," and that is the right kind of Hon. Colonel for a regiment to possess.

The objects of the Regimental Association, in the words of the Articles of Association, are:—

"To act as a patriotic association for the further-



COL.-SERGT. PHILLIP.

[*To face page* 160.



ARCHITECTURE MILITANT.

Vanity Fair Cartoon.

[*To face page* 161.

ance and support of British interests in all parts of the world and to form a centre and rallying point for all past and present members of the Artists' Rifles, and the various battalions, cadet corps, or other units or offshoots thereof, and linked or associated corps or organizations, with a view to giving information and assistance to such members that may enable them to find useful and profitable employment or otherwise promote their interests in any part of the British Empire, etc."

The Royal Colonial Institute took great interest in the project and assisted in many ways in the formation of the Association, among other things placing two rooms at 17, Craven Street at its disposal.

The Association started a Corps' paper with the title of the *Artists' Rifles' Journal*, which, under able management, developed into a most interesting and attractive periodical.

The A.R.R.A. at the present moment boasts a large membership, and has been, and is, an unqualified success. Any old Artist who has not yet joined should make it his first business to do so.

. . . . .

The United Arts Rifles, a well-known and successful war-time Volunteer Regiment, started business by calling themselves the Artists' Rifles, which, of course, had to be jumped on at once. They apologised very nicely for the *faux pas* and asked if we could suggest a title. After solemn consideration our Mess asked them if "Limelight

Lancers" or, as an alternative, "Thespian Thrusters" would be acceptable. Finally, they settled down to "United Arts," which gave the impression of keeping in touch with Art without treading on our toes, and as their war kit then consisted of white sweaters, there was no danger of one regiment being mistaken for the other. Many of their members, when they had to "go the whole hog," joined our ranks, and good men they were too. This excellent Volunteer Regiment afforded most substantial help to our 1st Battalion Comforts Fund by organizing a really splendid concert at the New Theatre, on Sunday, January 13th, 1918.

. . . . .

A very interesting and important work was the Officers' School of Instruction at Tidworth, to the command of which Colonel May succeeded after his return from France; and having provided this very able Commandant and Instructor, the Corps will like to take some credit to themselves for the excellent results achieved and I cannot do better than give, in Colonel May's own words, the introductory remarks in his "Epitome of the Course of Instruction given at No. 3 School of Instruction for Infantry Officers, Candahar Barracks, Tidworth":

"The course of training at this school lasts barely six weeks, but the students having all had previous training, in many respects it is a refresher course. The syllabus of work is the result of considerable experience acquired since the beginning of the war in

the training, both in France and England, of thousands of young men to be officers, for practically every Regular Infantry Regiment and most auxiliary units in the British Army.

"It does not profess to include everything a young officer should know, the time is too limited; but is based on points of training which Battalion Commanders at the front constantly find lacking in young officers when they arrive. It is being constantly revised, every effort is made to find and remove the "weak spots" in the training and military knowledge of each young officer and particularly keep the syllabus and the training practical and 'up-to-date' in accordance with latest requirements.

"Throughout the whole course every effort is made to instil the following:—

"Morale, discipline, character, behaviour, and honour in officers, '*Esprit de Corps*,' 'Obligation of Rank,' 'Care of, and devotion to, men.'"

The foregoing is a good description of the objects of the school in concise form. That these objects were attained with excellent results is a fact known to many, and especially to those officers who went through the course under Colonel May's tuition. Some of those attending arrived at Tidworth with a sense of irritation at being "sent to school again," but almost invariably ended by thanking the Commandant for all they had been taught while under his instruction.

As an instance of the Commandant's initiative and powers of organization, it is interesting to note the fact that he formed a number of special courses —popularly known at the school as "The Colonel's Freaks." There was a course for Quartermasters— the first of its kind formed anywhere—also courses for Military Police, Army Chaplains of all denominations, Junior Staff Officers, Volunteer C.O.'s, and Adjutants. A military-law course was also provided for officers who were professional lawyers in civil life, with a view to their qualifying as instructors in military law. Other courses were for professional engineers, and also for doctors before going to the R.A.M.C. Practically all officers of Australian reinforcements arriving in England went through the school under Colonel May before proceeding to France.

Another successful enterprise during the war was the formation in January, 1918, of a Junior Cadet Corps. In the latter part of 1916 I drew up a scheme for the formation of a probationary or "Nursery" company of boys of seventeen for preliminary training at the Depôt, with the idea that those who proved satisfactory during such initiation should be passed into the ranks of our 2nd (O.T.C.) Battalion. I pointed out that such a company might be formed without expense to the country, as the boys would continue to live at home (recruits for the company being obtained from among those living in or near London), would receive no pay, and

provide their own kit. I knew of a number of boys who had left school and who were kicking their heels at home, a nuisance to themselves and their parents, who were ready and keen to join such a company if it could be formed. The scheme was warmly approved by the O.C. our O.T.C. Battalion, was forwarded with a strong recommendation to the War Office, promptly pigeon-holed, and nothing more heard of it. The idea was, I think, a sound one, if only on the grounds that it would have prevented a number of boys of the right stamp and education for the making of future officers from misrepresenting their age and joining the ranks of ordinary fighting units.

As this suggestion for a "whole time" company could not be approved, the next best thing appeared to be the raising of a Cadet Company on ordinary peace-time Territorial lines, and the matter was energetically taken up by Lieutenant Bernard Howard, one of our subalterns who had been demobilized on business grounds. The idea was to meet as far as possible the needs of boys who had left school before reaching eighteen, and to maintain also a steady supply of boys of the right stamp for the 2nd (O.T.C.) Battalion.

To assist him in organizing the new unit, Howard secured the help of Lieutenant J. B. Concanon (late London Irish), formerly a pre-war machine-gun Artist; and Geoffry Howard, an ex-Artist Q.M.S., who for a considerable time was on my staff at the

Depôt. W. A. Huggins, L. R. Huggins, and C. J. Stewart—all old Artist sergeants—also joined the staff as instructors. The new unit had a powerful backing from old members, all former C.O.s of the regiment, headed by Colonel Edis, consenting to become patrons.

The recruiting started slowly, but gradually improved, and by the middle of February, the necessary thirty having been obtained, the unit received official recognition from the London Territorial Force Association, and was affiliated to the Corps. By May a sufficient number had joined to permit of a two company establishment. Two officers, invalided out of the army, Lieutenant F. A. Hobday (late West Yorks) and Second-Lieutenant S. B. Mitchell (late London Irish), joined and acted as Company Commanders.

The chief difficulty, ever present with such a cadet unit, is that of making bricks without straw, or, in other words, the finding of the necessary money for raising, equipping, and training. The cadets were asked to pay a subscription of two guineas, and to provide their wn uniform at a cost of £2 10*s*. It was found that on this basis, with strict economy, the new unit was just able to keep afloat. The work aimed at was a grounding in elementary drill, and a thorough instruction in musketry, followed by a course on the miniature range, culminating with firing of the recruit's course on the open range. One night a week was devoted to physical training

under instructors lent either by the 2nd Battalion or by No. 15 (Artists' Rifles) Officer Cadet Battalion. Boxing made headway and annual contests were projected with the Inns of Court cadets. Valuable assistance was given by the 2nd Battalion, and arrangements were made with marked success to attach the Cadets for training at Hare Hall Camp at Easter, Whitsuntide, and in August. This brought them into close touch with the mobilized forces, gave them an insight into the training of an O.T.C. unit, and an opportunity of learning their way about their future regiment, helping them generally to understand and absorb the traditions and habits of the Artists' Rifles.

Unfortunately, reasons arose which rendered difficult the carrying on of the work of this excellent cadet company, and it was disbanded at the end of 1918, much to the regret of those who had taken such pains to make it a success. As a great deal of the work was carried on at the Depôt, I had opportunities of observing the trouble which was taken in the initiation of these Junior Cadets, and I think that the greatest credit is due to those who gave the benefit of their experience and the time necessary for carrying on the work. It is to be hoped that something on similar lines will be revived in the future. As a reserve of youngsters for feeding the Corps it seemed to me to be excellent.

During the latter half of 1918 there was very little doing at the Depôt, and this state of affairs proved

to be very convenient, as it enabled me to keep a closer eye on what was left of business, but as architects had been pretty well " done in " by the order which prohibited any work of over £500 in value being taken in hand, things generally were very thin. However, it was refreshing to dust one's T-square, see how many drawing pins were left, and indulge in hopes of reviving practice after the war. On two occasions, when I had surreptitiously proceeded to my office, the Depôt was visited by a Staff Officer from District H.Q. who made urgent and pressing enquiries for the O.C. Depôt. The first time he made a descent the Depôt rang me up, and I made a record passage to Duke's Road, just in time to miss the Staff Officer, who was clearing off in a car as I came round the corner, and, although I sprinted in form, I could not catch him. One of our own Captains was fortunately there at the time and entertained him with cigarettes and assurances that " Captain Blomfield is certain to be back directly, sir." The report of the Orderly Room was :

" Yes, sir, Colonel —— has just gone. He was quite harmless, sir."

On the occasion of his second descent the harmless Colonel found out where I was and rang me up at my office, wanting to know what I was doing and why I was doing it, etc., whereupon, bearing in mind that they could but kick me out, and that I had got to live after the war, I said,

"You see, sir, there is nothing whatever to do at the Depôt, and so I have run up here for a short time to look after my business."

Which explanation, being a man of sense, he accepted. If he had been an ass I might have got "the boot."

And so time passed on, and the erstwhile glories of the Depôt gradually faded, brightened by Armistice Day, November the 11th, 1918, which, as everyone knows, was a real day of spontaneous rejoicing. I do not think that any of the days of "rejoicing to order" which came afterwards touched it. I contrived, after seeing that all the bunting we could raise was properly displayed, to get down to Piccadilly Circus in the middle of the day and saw something of the general rag which was proceeding—girls sitting astride the bonnets of motor 'buses—a real live bishop hanging on to the back of a taxi waving a flag—two generals walking along blowing tin trumpets—with numberless little knots of people doing, very often perfectly seriously, dances in odd corners. In fact, everyone was properly mad for the day. After returning to the Depôt for part of the afternoon—I shall not say how long I was there, in case the Staff Officer above referred to should see this—I found my way into the Piccadilly Tube on my homeward journey, and after hacking my way through, managed to get into a train, surrendering my seat as soon as we started to a very tired-look-

ing, dishevelled elderly female, who thereupon said,

"Oh, thank you, you're a gentleman," archly adding, "I always *did* love a soldier."

To which I remarked that she must have had plenty of opportunities of indulging her predilection in the past four years, but her daughter, who was with her, said,

"Oh, mother, and you've just hugged a policeman!" afterwards explaining that this amorous performance was dictated by fear of being trampled on by the crowd.

At South Kensington Station I observed a sedate and distinguished-looking father, a stout and beaming mother, and a one-armed subaltern son, solemnly and effectively dancing an impromptu minuet on the platform.

It was a great day, as everyone who had a chance of seeing things will remember for the rest of their lives.

After this the principal object in life for many of us was to get demobilized, and I soon made a move to that end, but did not succeed in bringing off a visit to the Crystal Palace until May 1st, 1919.

The Territorial Decoration to which I had become entitled by compiling twenty years' commissioned service—done in bits from 1882 onwards—was gazetted in time for me proudly to wear the ribbon for three weeks before being demobbed. I was

glad to get this, my one bit of ribbon, as it represented a good deal of real work done in the past and also because it had, as I think, an added value as showing that one was of the old crowd who had helped—in a small way—to carry on the work which resulted in the position and reputation held by the Artists at the outbreak of war.

At the moment of penning this portion of what my family call "Daddy's Piffle," some time has passed since the Armistice and subsequent signing of peace, and we are again getting used to hats, stiff collars and boiled shirts. It was eminently satisfactory to find that not more than a third of one's pre-war clothes had been consumed by moth, that trousers still met and fastened round one's middle, and to be able to say now that up to the present time one has not fallen into the hands of a piratical tailor for a re-fit.

I think the relief experienced by those who had been serving on getting into mufti—or "plain clothes," if you had been in the Guards—was immense—the feeling that you could (within limits of course) do anything, and that the ordinary policeman could not haul you up for being "improperly dressed." Also it was nice to know that—after a week or two in which to get accustomed to the change—you did not salute when in a Homburg or bowler hat, also that there was no returning to khaki, with the inevitable result of taking off your service cap instead of saluting. One of the things

I found very disturbing on returning to civilization was the use of an umbrella—nasty, heavy, awkward thing at the best of times—and in common with many others, I discarded it for some time, except on occasions of ceremonial, but am getting back to it now.

Many people cherished a quiet hope that the war would prove to be the death knell of the top hat, but not a bit of it!—it will be with us always. For a nation which in these days likes to think of itself as progressive and democratic, we are horribly conservative in some things.

Discipline is a very fine thing, and nothing worth doing in the army can be done without it, but it is really wonderful on looking back to think how much we all became part of a machine and how correctly and beautifully we behaved to some of the terrible trials who by ill luck, mismanagement, or mistake, were placed over us—I am speaking of service at home. I am told that there are quite a large number of carefully thought out plans for quietly disposing of one senior officer who made himself peculiarly offensive to those under his command, but that there is considerable divergence of opinion as to how the execution shall be carried out.

This "Piffle" must now draw to a close, but before winding up, I must pay a tribute to the manner in which the Staff at the Depôt seconded me

during my four and a half years' command—with particular reference to my "Chief of Staff," Sergeant G. W. Smith, who was with me the whole time and to whose loyalty and support I owe much.

On looking through what I have written I have come to the conclusion that there is a good deal of "I" in it, and foresee critics speaking of it as follows:

"Have you read Blomfield's book about the Corps?"

"Yes, I've read it all right, but it isn't about the Corps, it's about himself."

However, my Mentor and Literary Adviser said when I began to write,

"Make it as personal and reminiscent as you like, you can afford to do that at your age."

He also added at a later date, "You are nothing if not flippant," and I am not sure that this was altogether a nice thing to say, but he intended it, he says, really, as a compliment to my *inimitable mimicry.*

How many others may be tempted to write about the Artists remains to be seen, but I know there are plenty of men who have served in the Corps who, if they turned their minds to it, could produce books relating thereto which would contain a deal of matter possessing the greatest interest to the large number of men who have passed through our ranks, and I only hope my modest attempt may be the

forerunner of others. The Official History, to which I have already referred, will be a very fine record, but there are many good stories still to be told, some of which could be told in a drawing-room, some might do for the pantry—where a butler is kept—but some could only be revealed in the Vestry.

We have all of us read that "it is only after some years that it will be possible to review the war in its true perspective," and if this is true, and looking to the fact that books on the war have, for some time, been suffering from a slump, it may well be some time before the Official History makes its appearance. As to the ability of the Corps to turn out good stuff, one has only to turn to the pages of that most excellent production, the regimental *Journal*, to realise the journalistic and literary possibilities of the Artists.

As a finale, or *bonne bouche*, it made me feel thoroughly satisfied and pleased to receive the following communication from the War Office:

"For notification and return, please.

"Captain C. J. Blomfield, Commanding No. 66 T.F. Depôt.

"This officer is next in order by seniority for promotion to field rank, but in view of his age, his present employment, and the fact that he has not been overseas, he will be superseded."

This pat on the back was, of course, distinctly

encouraging, but it did not delay my action in seeking demobilization.

However, the "Powers that Be" have startled and given us much to think about by making the Hon. Colonel of the Regiment, at the age of eighty, a K.B.E. for "services rendered in connection with the war," an honour which has, if possible, increased the admiration with which we have always regarded him.

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner, *Frome and London*